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Conceptions of the Future in Aeschylus' Oresteia

Conceptions of the Future in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*

by
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Abstract

This thesis examines the narrative function and significance of the future through its configurations in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Drawing on the fields of narratology, literary criticism, and philosophy of history, it argues that the future is employed in the *Oresteia* as a narrative in a number of different ways. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 probe the *teleological implications* of the future in the four plays of the tetralogy, exploring the meaning of *telos* not only as a purposeful fulfilment but also as transition, deferral, and perpetual crisis. Those aspects of the future favour approaches that challenge and undermine the sense of a complete closure. They also draw connections between ancient and modern understandings of the future as something experienced in the present: either as a disruption outside one's control (*future present*) or as a new order to be produced in and for the present (*present future*). Moving beyond the concept of *telos*, Chapter 5 demonstrates how the narrative of the *Oresteia* manipulates certain types of future-related knowledge through the literary terms of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*. It is argued that, far from neat, the mapping of these terms onto the concepts of the *open* and *closed future* is often unpredictable. Finally, two other concepts explored are *suspense* and *surprise* (Chapters 6 and 7). They are both examined as intense experiences that are interconnected but distinct. The focus is on their centrality to the narrative mechanisms through which we find ourselves anticipating the future or marvelling at its unexpectedness. Taken together, the concepts explored in the thesis allow us to imagine and experience the future not as something remote and foreseeable, but as something at once tangible, unpredictable, and, thus, always open.

In memory of my father

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I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, who was looking forward to seeing me cross the finish line more than anyone.

Vasileia

Author’s declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: Vasileia Kouliouri DATE: 31 March 2021

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1

Introduction

This thesis explores the function and significance of the future in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (458 BCE). While the tetralogy has been the focus of intensive criticism, the question of time and, especially, the future remains under-researched. In fact, there has a been a systematic lack of research on the issue of time in Greek tragedy. There are only a few critical works attempting a sustained analysis of how tragic plays engage with time, and discussions of the future are even more limited. My analysis explores the different functions of the future, and also offers a set of different perspectives with which to approach its significance in Aeschylus. More specifically, I study tragedy as a textual type of narrative (a discourse which is composed of events and characters, and tells a story),[1] and whose value cannot limit itself to the historical and cultural framework of its original staging.

This Introduction addresses three key questions. The first has to do with the significance of the future in narrative (section 1.1). The second question relates to my methodology (section 1.2). It draws on distinct but interconnected theoretical frameworks, from narratology to literary criticism and philosophy of history. My third question has to do with my choice of case study. I outline the reasons for choosing Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and for the significance of reading it as a tetralogy rather than a trilogy (section 1.3). The Introduction concludes with an overview of the six chapters.

[1] Ricoeur (1984, I) e.g., 36; Barthes (1977) e.g., 79. More specifically, studies on Greek tragic narrative that draw on the above principle are, indicatively, Markantonatos (2002), Gould (2001), Lowe (2000) 18–20, Goward (1999) 9–12.

1.1. The future in narrative

A question that informs my whole thesis and which I need to introduce first is related to the significance of the future in narrative. The key term of my topic, the future, holds immediate relevance for ways of living and thinking, as a temporal sphere to which the whole range of human activities is inevitably connected. However, while the future is central to how we organise time and how we anticipate events to come, it is nevertheless ontologically obscure, vague, and out of reach, because it is subject to reflection and to circumstances outside our control. One way to come to terms with the perplexing nature of the future as a concept is to explore it through its narrative configurations. It is on that basis that I argue that the preoccupations of the *Oresteia* with the future become meaningful for its spectators and readers. Although they live outside the horizon of the narrative configuration of the events of the story, they nevertheless organise their traversing and experience of time 'in the manner of a narrative',[2] and turn to theatrical narrative, because it inserts a portrayal of the 'features of temporal experience'.[3]

I must make clear from the outset that, in examining the *Oresteia* as a narrative rather than as a dramatic text, I do not argue for a watertight distinction between the two. I do, however, favour the characterisation of the text as narrative rather than dramatic for two reasons. First, I stand for the argument that drama is a narrative genre, in line with the work undertaken recently by several narratologists. Second, any study of the future in drama has to acknowledge the significance of time as a key aspect of the study of narrative. An analysis of the future in the *Oresteia* as a dramatic text would have focused primarily on its literary and performance-related elements: literary conventions, lexical issues, characterisation, central themes, staging issues, the original audience, theatrical, political, domestic and ritual space. Despite the significance of these issues for what follows, my study of the future in the *Oresteia* will consider how my topic is understood and experienced by readers and spectators in ways that go *beyond* the specificities of the dramatic text.

[2] Ricoeur (1984, I) 3.

[3] Ricoeur (1984, I) 3.

Following Brian Richardson who paved the way for introducing drama into systematic narratological discussion,[4] Monika Fludernik has shown that drama is 'the most important narrative genre whose narrativity needs to be documented', and that this documentation needs to go beyond the eventfulness of the plot, which has been so far considered as the main narrative element of drama.[5] More specifically, Fludernik has shown how dramatic elements are used in narrative and how narrativity is used in drama.[6] Ansgar Nünning and Roy Sommer offer specific examples of the diegetic type of narrativity in drama, arguing for the need to distinguish among *types* (diegetic and mimetic) and *degrees* of narrativity.[7] Although such narrative models are key for exploring the narrativity of drama, they also have certain limitations for what I set out to do in my thesis. For example, the studies by Fludernik and by Nünning and Sommer address the audience as diegetic element in drama.[8] My discussion includes direct modes of addressing the audience, to the extent that they contribute to my specific topic of the future, but it does not limit itself to them.[9] In probing the future as narrativised in the *Oresteia* through both text-oriented and reception-oriented analysis, I set out to demonstrate how diegetic elements are employed in Aeschylus' dramas in an immersive way, a consideration that informs the way I have organised my material throughout the thesis.

Modern explorations of the future as a topic can be found in several disciplines: not only in the sciences, in disciplines such as physics, mathematics, and computers, but also in the humanities, especially in the philosophy of history, religious studies, philosophy, social studies, narratology, and literary and film studies. In the humanities, most explorations of the future, where attempted, remain part of broader discussions of the topic of time and refrain from establishing an independent research topic. For instance, Adrian Bardon's studies on the history and the future of the philosophy of time offer a comprehensive introduction to the subject of time but with very limited focus on the future.[10] Similarly, Barbara Adam's

[4] Richardson (1988). See also (1987).

[5] Quote from Fludernik (1996) 348.

[6] See Fludernik (2008) 358–67 and 367–77, respectively.

[7] Nünning & Sommer (2002) e.g., 332; (2008).

[8] Fludernik (2008); Nünning & Sommer (2008) 332.

[9] See, for instance, in the chapters that follow: Athena (3.2), the Watchman (4.2.1), the Furies (6.4.2).

[10] Bardon (2013); Bardon (ed.) (2012), where only Ismael (2012) focuses on the matter of the future.

monograph *Time*, which discusses how the understanding of time has been culturally embedded across the centuries, devotes only a few pages to the future, and more specifically to cultural practices of dealing with the unknown future, ranging from divination to scientific prediction.[11] Finally, in the edited volume *Time, Temporality and Now* by Harald Atmanspacher and Eva Ruhnau brings together scholars from a range of fields and perspectives, including philosophy, physics, and cognitive studies,[12] but its focus on the tension between conceptualisation and experience of time leaves little room for a detailed and systematic study of the future.

One of the earliest modern attempts to discuss the future as an independent topic comes from Jacques Derrida who, drawing on Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927), has developed the distinctive concept of *l'àvenir* (=the future to-come).[13] Since then, other studies that have emerged in recent times include Jean-Paul Martinon's *On Futurity: Malabou, Nancy and Derrida* (2007), a deconstructive analysis of futurity, through the focus on the act of translation. In the area of literary criticism, Amir Eshel's *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past* (2012) considers a number of contemporary works of German, Israeli, and Anglo-American literature, and explores their capacities for creating tools and coming to terms with the future, what he calls 'futurity'.[14] In the area of social sciences, Barbara Adam's and Chris Groves' *Future Matters: Action, Knowledge, Ethics* (2007) draws on cultural history and discusses how future was told, imagined, and constructed in the past, exploring our contemporary relations to the future. Emma Uprichard's article 'Narratives of the Future: Complexity, Time and Temporality' argues that future matters in both methodological and conceptual aspects in the field of social research: the study of social objects both in the present and the future is heavily dependent on narratives of the future.[15] More recently, John Urry has pinpointed the importance of thinking futures as part of the strategic planning of organisations.[16] Urry argues that social science must contribute to and benefit from the study of the future. He suggests overcoming the inherent difficulties of the issue through the

[11] E.g., Adam (2004) 82–89.

[12] Atmanspacher & Ruhnau (eds.) (1997).

[13] Derrida (1996) e.g., 68. References to the concept of *l'àvenir* can be found throughout Derrida's oeuvre.

[14] Eshel (2013) 4–5.

[15] Uprichard (2011) e.g., 2.

[16] Urry (2016) e.g., 12.

deployment of the terms 'possible futures', 'probable futures', 'preferable futures', and 'plausible futures'. According to the author, such explorations can promote taking responsibility for what is involved when discussing the future.

From the area of narratology, there are two studies in particular that I would single out as influential for my thesis. Mark Currie's *About Time* (2007) argues that the question of how we anticipate the future is a more effective tool to understand narratives than the retrospective account of the past. The author's claim that '[t]he present is the object of a future memory, and we live it as such, in anticipation of the story we will tell later, envisaging the present as past'[17] is illuminating for how a dialogue between (postmodern) literature and philosophy might be initiated. In shifting the focus from the practice of retrospection (past) towards the enterprise of anticipation (future), *About Time* develops an argument along lines similar to those pursued below. Despite its inspiring ideas and innovative perspective, however, Currie's study has influenced this thesis less than it might have done for two reasons. First, this is due to limitations regarding its rather prescriptive handling of the future as *always* played out with the present as its projection and with the past as its recording. And, second, it is due to the grounding of its argument to four postmodern novels, case studies which are chronologically and generically far away from the scope of this thesis.

Particularly relevant to my argument is the narratological series edited by Christoph Bode *The Narrating Futures* (2013), a five-volume series, which foregrounds the future and its qualities such as its openness and undecidedness, with a view to establishing a new area, the *Future Narratives*, on the grounds that 'all the narratology we have is derived from the corpus of Past Narratives'.[18] This series includes explorations of future narratives not only in print but also in film, in video games, in world climate change scenarios, and in other areas with relevant preoccupations. Finally, although the area of future studies (or futurology) counts several decades,[19] its recent growth and expansion demonstrate the pressing need for a more systematised approach of the matter of 'futures thinking' (or 'strategic foresight'). Although this area is not particularly preoccupied with the application of relevant theories and methods

[17] Currie (2007) 5.

[18] Bode (2013) vii.

[19] The term 'futurology' (from the German 'futurologie') was coined by Ossip K. Flechtheim in 1943 who published his book in 1970.

on works of literature, it nevertheless provides useful conceptual frameworks and a large body of case studies from other disciplines.[20]

Classical studies have not followed closely this budding interest in the study of the future.[21] One reason for the lack of scholarly discussions about the future in ancient Greek narrative is because the topic of the future is under-theorised among ancient Greek authors themselves. For example, one could argue that both historiography and tragedy are mainly preoccupied with the past and the narration of historical and mythical events. However, this would overlook the fact that historiography and tragedy are preoccupied not only with the past but also with the future. As Alexandra Lianeri points out, '[t]he future was formulated and considered in antiquity by evoking the plurality of its meaning.'[22]

A few examples illustrate this plurality. Oracles, prophecies, and other divine manifestations related to the future can be found across Greek literature as a result of the broader narrativisation of the future as a temporal sphere in Greek culture.[23] An obvious manifestation of the ancient interest in the future has to do with a strong awareness of posterity. For instance, Thucydides, in the prologue to his *Histories*, predicts the greatness of the Peloponnesian War (1.1.1) and states that his work will be a 'possession of all time' (κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί, 1.22.4).[24] Based on this idea, James Porter has outlined the model of the 'classical', according to which classical works of art are projections of the present into the future (imagining future beholders look at the present of writing as a past).[25] Another example is the imagining of a future which, by encompassing the past, will be better than the uncertainty of the present. Such an understanding of the future can be found in texts such as Aristophanes' *Clouds* and *Frogs*. In both plays, Aeschylus wins as the classical poet, and the respect for the past (Aeschylus) outweighs the importance of novelty (Euripides). However limited, such

[20] See Cornish (2005). For more on future studies, see: the *Journal of Futures Studies* http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw; the *Open Futures Library* http://openfutures.net/.

[21] For an overview of works which are preoccupied with the broad issue of time in antiquity (with references to ancient Greek literature), see Eidinow & Maurizio (2020) 1–12; Ben-Dov & Doerin (2017) 1–8; Dunn (2007) 7–8. See also Revermann (1993) 238 and n. 4. for a detailed bibliography on the matter of time in ancient Greek literature.

[22] Lianeri (2016) 12.

[23] See Eidinow's study (2007), where an extensive collection of texts from the ancient Greek world demonstrates the multiple ways in which the uncertain future was perceived and managed.

[24] Translation by Mynott (2013). See Lianeri (2016) 1–2.

[25] Porter (2006) 48–55.

examples provide a sufficient idea of the range of uses of the future in ancient Greek narrative.[26]

Special, even if brief, mention needs to be made here to Aristotle's contribution to this diversity of meanings of the future in antiquity. Particularly useful is the use of the future in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Here the notion of the future lies within the definition of the end (τελευτὴ) of the tragic work as a whole (ὅλον), 'which itself naturally occurs, whether necessarily or usually, after a preceding event, but need not be followed by anything else' (1450b26, 28–30). Although this quote does not explicitly refer to the relationship between poetic activity and temporal experience, it does emphasise the priority of the temporal over the spatial, while also raising the need for closure.[27] It is unfortunate that among the influential scholarly works on the *Poetics* of recent decades, such as those by Stephen Halliwell, Richard Janko, Leonardo Tarán and Dimitri Gutas,[28] there has been little interest in temporal aspects of the plot and an overall tendency to focus on the limitations imposed by what is missing from Aristotle's essay rather than an appreciation of what is there.

Also of relevance is the way in which Aristotle deals with the future in the *Rhetoric*, where the future is what is always lying ahead and from where it can be projected to the listeners' minds and create anticipation (e.g., 1379a, 1412a, 1415a6). The implications of this stimulating observation require some unpacking but I will defer them for the moment as they will be pursued in some detail in the Theoretical Preludes of Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7 below.[29] By contrast, Aristotle's more elaborate discussion of the broader topic of time in the *Physics* (Book IV (10–14)) has proved less relevant for the purpose and scope of my thesis: in forming a definition of time, the *Physics* offers a set of puzzles through which time gradually develops as a relational concept that can only be explained through its units (past, present, and future) and properties.[30] Here, the future (usually τὸ μέλλον and its cognates) is conceived as the not-yet existing (e.g., 218a1), which the 'now' holds together with the past (e.g., 222a10–11). The concepts of 'change' (κίνησις) and 'movement' (μεταβολή) are also introduced as

[26] For examples of the diverse articulations of the future in historiography, see Lianeri (2016).

[27] Michelakis (2013) 173.

[28] Halliwell (1987); House (1956). See also Janko (1987); Gutas & Tarán (2012).

[29] Cf. Ricoeur (1984, I, e.g., 52) who argues that Aristotle has no interest in the temporal preoccupations of the plot in the *Poetics*, unlike in the *Physics*.

[30] 218a31: τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ; 224a17: τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν οἰκείων.

instruments to specify the nature of time. However, despite their significance for the broader issue of Aristotle's views on time, neither the ideas themselves pursued in the *Physics* nor the scholarly work they have triggered have much to contribute to a discussion of the future. The future is constantly pushed into the shadow of the present which, whether momentary or persistent,[31] is constantly dominant[32] and at the centre of a temporal asymmetry between a fulfilled past and a blank future.[33] When it comes to discussing Aristotle's views on the future and how it is experienced through narrative, the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* hold much more useful clues.

The strong preoccupation of Classical studies with the past has left little room for examinations of the future. Among the earlier and very influential studies of time in ancient Greek literature, Hermann Fraenkel's article and Jacqueline De Romilly's book approach time as a compact concept, mostly seen through the past, with the future appearing only in passing references.[34] More recently, Irene De Jong's and René Nünlist's edited volume *Time in Ancient Greek Literature* (2007) offers numerous insights into the question of how time might be considered as a constituent element of narrative in Greek literary genres. Yet, this study limits itself to discussions of the future only as a motif and not as an independent topic and concept.[35] Other research on time in Greek literature that has emerged in recent years is also focused on the past. Jonas Grethlein's *The Greeks and their Past* (2010) focuses on how different types of narrative introduce the past in the context of literary memory.[36] Poulheria Kyriakou's *The Past in Aeschylus and Sophocles* (2012) explores the notion of the past as mythological events preceding the tragic stories dramatised.[37] The edited volume *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras* (2012) analyses the importance and presence of the past at every level

[31] See e.g., Bostock (2006) 147–49.

[32] McGinnis (2003) e. g., 153.

[33] White (1989) e.g., 208. On time in Aristotle's *Physics*, see further: Roark (2011), where, re-introducing Aristotle's ideas on time into the contemporary thought, it is argued that Aristotle explores time as having both material aspect (as a *motion*) and formal aspect (as a *perception*); Coope (2005), whose interpretation of time as a type of a universal order ('number') overcomes misinterpretations and misjudgements of Aristotle's study on time (e.g., 5).

[34] Fraenkel (1955), first published in 1931; De Romilly (1968).

[35] De Jong & Nünlist (2007). In this edited volume, see the following works on Greek drama: Barrett on Aeschylus (2007, 255–73); De Jong on Sophocles (2007, 275–92); Lloyd on Euripides (2007, 293–304), Bowie (2007, 305–17) on Aristophanes. For a similar approach, see Hopman's study on Aeschylus' *Persians* (2013).

[36] With a chapter on Aeschylus' *Persians* (2010, 74–104). See also Grethlein (2007).

[37] Kyriakou (2012) 2.

of Greek society, through a wide selection of texts and authors.[38] An exception to this preoccupation with the past is Francis Dunn's *Present Shock in Late Fifth-century Greece* (2007), which shifts the focus from the mythical and historical past to the anxieties of a lived present of the fifth century BCE. Although references to the future are not absent from this study, they are part of an argument that foregrounds the present as a time of uncertainty. Overall, although these lines of research demonstrate the need for examining the temporalities of Greek narrative, considerations of the future are strikingly under-represented and under-theorised.

The lack of such considerations needs to be discussed in tandem with the tendency to examine the concept of time together with the concept of space. This tendency is linked to the general disposition to speak about and understand abstract domains, such as time, using terms from more concrete experiential domains, such as space.[39] For instance, space can be seen, touched, passed through, and explored, while time cannot be typically observed and perceived by the senses. These ontological differences between time and space can favour explorations which prioritise space over time. Two such examples from the field of Classical studies are Alex Purves' *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative* (2010) and Richard Seaford's *Cosmology and the Polis: The Social Construction of Space and Time in the Tragedies of Aeschylus* (2012). The first study offers a comprehensive study of space and a much less well-developed study of time in a range of texts (notably for my purposes not in tragedy). The second study explores how the unity of space and time (drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of *chronotope*) can be employed in Aeschylus' tragedies, though again with a primary focus on space rather than time, and with only passing references to the future.[40] Despite the broad usefulness of how these discussions frame their arguments, I argue that the concept of time, and, more specifically, of the future, must be disengaged from the concept of space. My argument is not so much related to the use of metaphors of space for time. These are, in all respects, an established linguistic practice, examples of which one may find in this thesis as well.

[38] Marincola, Llewellyn-Jones & Maciver (eds.) (2012).

[39] See Lakoff & Johnson (1980) 42–46. Also, Deutscher (2005) 133–34; Morson (1994) 17. Koselleck (2004, 259–60) introduces the terms 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation' based on space-time metaphors. On the use of πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω in the same context, see Dunkel (1982–83), cited in Bassi (2016a, 221).

[40] See Chapter 2 on how Seaford's model can be accommodated in such a discussion. For another example of a study on Greek tragedy which focuses on space more than time, see Lamari (2010).

However, when it comes to systematic explorations of time-related matters, one needs to search for and put to work a set of terms and concepts suitable to demonstrate the specificity of those matters.

In studies of Greek tragedy, the preoccupation with the future is limited in topics, narrow in scope, and restrictive in methodology. The future is, overall, approached as a theme and as an object for observation and examination, isolated from contemporary discussions, and as something that pertains only to dramatic characters and their temporalities. Susanna Phillippo's article ''A Future for Astyanax': Alternative and Imagined Futures for Hector's son in Classical and European Drama' (2007) presents the idea of a character's future as something which goes beyond a single narrative. Gerry Wakker's article 'Future Expectations in Sophocles' offers a linguistic approach to the future expressions of the verb μέλλω (2006). Anna Lamari's essay 'Knowing a Story's End: Future Reflexive in the Narrative of the Argive Expedition Against Thebes' (2007) focuses on the theoretical category of future reflexivity as the relation between the time of narration and the time of the story. Finally, Rebecca Bushnell's book *Tragic Time in Drama, Film, and Videogames: The Future in the Instant* (2016) is concerned with the idea of tragic time which survives in a wide selection of narratives, but devotes only a handful of pages to Greek tragedy itself.[41]

In Greek tragedy specifically, it is not only the topic of the future but also the broader topic of time that is still 'in its infancy'.[42] I have already mentioned the pioneering work by Herman Fraenkel which, although not directly related to the future, provides useful insights into time in works of ancient Greek literature from a developmental perspective.[43] I have also touched on Jacqueline De Romilly's work *Time in Greek Tragedy*, which tends to oversimplify complex issues.[44] Similar to Fraenkel, De Romilly argues that, moving from Aeschylus to Euripides, temporal concepts are gradually 'refined'.[45] As both studies undermine the significance and complexity of temporality in Aeschylus, it is probably not surprising that they have not inspired other more focused studies. For more useful insights into time in

[41] Bushnell (2016) 5–11.

[42] Revermann (2008) 238.

[43] Fraenkel (1960). See also Momigliano (1966, 8–10) for an appraisal of Fraenkel's views.

[44] As she puts it in her Introduction, the reason for her study is 'of general curiosity' (1968, 2).

[45] De Romilly (1968) 24.

Aeschylus one needs to turn to more general studies of the dramatist such as those published in the 1970s by Anne Lebeck (*The Oresteia: A Study in Language and Structure)* and Oliver Taplin (*The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: the Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy*). In the 1980s Thomas Rosenmeyer's *The Art of Aeschylus* points out that 'time is of the essence in Aeschylus',[46] but it nevertheless devotes only a section to issues of 'Plot, Tension, Time'.[47] A more recent book-length study, published in 2012, Marcel A. Widzisz's *Chronos on the Threshold*, offers a thematic discussion of the *Oresteia* based on time as ritual and as agency. It however has surprisingly little on the future and neglects aspects of time in narrative which are central to my approach.

Among the works in Classical studies whose focus, methodology, and approach have been influential for my work, I will single out the following. Of narrower but more direct relevance for my analysis is Simon Goldhill's article 'Two Notes on τέλος and Related Words in the *Oresteia*' (1984), Charles Chiasson's 'Σωφρονοῦντες ἐν χρόνωι: Athenians and Time in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*' (1999–2000), and Martin Revermann's 'Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, Chronotopes, and the 'Aetiological Mode'' (2008). Throughout the chapters that follow, I frequently return to these articles. Among recent studies of broader significance for my work, I will single out: Duncan Kennedy's *Antiquity and the Meanings of Time* (2013), which demonstrates through several key texts (including Homer's *Odyssey*, Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Augustine's *Confessions*) how conceptions of human time in antiquity enrich contemporary thought on temporality. Jonas Grethlein's *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography: 'Futures Past' from Herodotus to Augustine* (2013a) shows that the tension and the balance between experience (past) and teleology (future), which readers of historiographical narratives experience, results in a closer understanding of the matter of time.[48] I would also add two edited volumes by Alexandra Lianeri which have shaped my thinking throughout this dissertation: *The Western Time of Ancient History* (2011) and *Knowing the Future Time In and Through Greek Historiography* (2016). Despite their focus on historiography, they both raise a series of stimulating questions about the uses of the future, which can be related to tragic narrative as well.

[46] Rosenmeyer (1982) 331 and n. 17.

[47] Rosenmeyer (1982) 311–36.

[48] See also Grethlein (2016) & (2014).

1.2. Theoretical and methodological framework

In this section, I introduce the approach that has informed the arguments of my thesis, demonstrating how it builds on and goes beyond the studies I have examined so far.

I will begin by foregrounding the principal methodological perspective of my study: I argue that it is only by taking into consideration the engagement of both spectators and readers with the narrative that one can grasp how the future is presented as being at stake in the four plays of the *Oresteia*. In doing so, I shift my focus away from matters of historical specificity, which privilege the original spectators of the dramatic festival of 458 BCE over later readers and spectators, towards issues of narrative discourse which spectators and readers share. While the emphasis on the cultural and political background of the plays might point in the direction of historical specificity, I nevertheless focus on the eventfulness of the text which controls what the future holds in store for everyone who is exposed to it, whether they are spectators or readers, contemporary to Aeschylus or of a later period. In doing so, I draw on Ricoeur's narrative theory as it emerges out of his foundational three-volume work *Time and Narrative*.

In constructing his threefold model of mimesis, Ricoeur engages with Aristotle's model of the tragic *muthos*. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle presents the tragic plot as a synthesis of multiple events arranged in a *complete* story. For Ricoeur, the tragedian ought to arrange those events in a way that 'the discordances appear concordant',[49] and this is the result of artistic design (for example 1452a18–22). Aristotle himself does not deal extensively or explicitly with the temporal aspects of emplotment.[50] By temporal aspects, Ricoeur means the traversal of mimesis through time, or, in other words, the human experience of time, whose elusive nature was eloquently described by Augustine in his *Confessions*, the second major text in Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*. Bringing together Aristotle's and Augustine's different priorities, Ricoeur argues that Aristotle's 'paradigm of order' can function as 'the poetic solution to the

[49] See Ricoeur (1984, I) e.g., x, 52.

[50] Ricoeur (1984, I) 48: 'Unlike the *Rhetoric*, which subordinates the order of discourse to its effects on its audience, the Poetics indicates no explicit interest in the communication of the work to the public'. For a less sceptical view on Aristotle's concern of the reception of tragedy, see Bouchard (2012, 186): 'However, by contrast with the *Rhetoric*, little scholarly interest is imparted to the 'audience' factor in Aristotle's treatise of poetics. The general tendency is rather to overlook this admittedly contingent factor and to make Aristotle the exponent of a self-standing 'idea' of tragedy that would be blind to the actual conditions of the reception of tragedy'.

speculative paradox of time',[51] whereas Augustine's *distentio animi* describes the human experience of measuring time as it has passed.[52] This merging of perspectives results in Ricoeur's model of mimesis, according to which both understanding and experience are narrativised, whether we encounter them in fiction or in real life.

Ricoeur's model of mimesis consists of three layers of mimetic activity which concurrently take place while reading or watching.[53] The first consists of *mimesis 1*, which describes the prenarrative structure of experience, according to which any individual shares a culture rooted in a human community ('prefiguration'). From 'the meaningful structures, symbolic resources, and temporal character' of *mimesis 1*,[54] we move on to *mimesis 2*, the mimesis of creation which turns such elements into emplotment ('configuration'). Finally, *mimesis 3* is the moment when two levels of time, that of the emplotment and that of the act of reading or spectating, which may initially seem distinct, bleed into each other.[55] According to Ricoeur, through this process and with this intersection, mimesis reaches its complete fulfilment and the significance of the work of fiction discloses itself to the reader and the spectator ('refiguration').[56] As Genevieve Liveley points out, the above model has 'important implications for modelling how we live, tell, and read the future and how we process anticipation *as if* narratively configured.'[57]

What makes Ricoeur's model of mimesis the dominant model that shapes my theoretical and methodological frame is that, having as a point of departure Aristotle's theory of the tragic plot (which is also important for my thesis), it moves towards a broader model which aspires to unlock the phenomenology of time (experience) through narrative (plot). Working with Ricoeur's theory allows us to see how experience and plot can either enrich or distort each other, especially when it comes to anticipating the future. More specifically, Ricoeur's theory addresses the question of how the emplotment of the future in the *Oresteia*

[51] Ricoeur (1984, I) 38.

[52] On Augustine's *Confessions*, see Ricoeur (1984, I) 5–30; on Aristotle's *Poetics*, see Ricoeur (1984, I) 31–51.

[53] Ricoeur (1984, I) 53–65.

[54] Ricoeur (1984, I) 54.

[55] Ricoeur (1984, I) 53: 'the act of reading—the unity of the traversal from mimesis 1, to mimesis 3, by way of mimesis 2'.

[56] Ricoeur (1984, I) 71. See also Ricoeur (1988, III) 157–79.

[57] Liveley (2017) 7.

(mimesis 2) reconfigures the readers' and the spectators' experience of the future (mimesis 3), which then returns to practical life, which also shapes the prenarrative level of experience (mimesis 1), and so on and so forth. The main idea which underlies the chapters that follow is that, no matter which aspect of a multi-faceted future do we turn towards, it is only by directing our attention to the convergence between the world of the text and the world of the receivers that we can actually engage with the status of the future as what is being at stake.

Ricoeur's fundamental contribution to this topic has been followed by a number of other studies preoccupied with temporality as an element of narrativity. Not all of them are of direct relevance, but here is a selection of those that are. Fludernik (2003) focuses on narrative tense and the question of how, from the point of view of narration, tenses are not always easy to map onto past, present, or future.[58] In the chapters that follow, I often comment on the tenses which are associated with the future, which are not always future tenses.[59] Richardson (2002) discusses temporality through six strategies (circular, contradictory, antinomic, differential, conflated, dual or multiple), with examples from postmodern narratives with non-realistic constructions of time.[60] Similar patterns related to the employment of the future I include in my own discussion, as for example in the case of the cyclical movement of time in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*, the placement of *Proteus* in the chronology of events of the *Oresteia*, Cassandra's *future present* in the *Agamemnon* and the interchanging *present future* and *future present* in the *Eumenides*.[61] Sternberg (1992) explores narrative dynamics and more specifically the role of surprise, suspense, and curiosity as three master forms of temporality.[62] These are determined by the relation between chronology and teleology both within the arrangement of the whole and within its disarrangements, such as the anachronies of the plot. The most important contribution of Sternberg's essay has to do with the question of *whose* surprise we are dealing with, and Chapter 7 below aspires to address this question with a difference: while in Sternberg's narratological account of surprise the unexpected arrives from the future and relates to an unexplained past, in my argument

[58] Fludernik (2003).

[59] See for example the Chorus' past narration (2.2), Cassandra's *future present* (4.2.4), Orestes' *present future* (4.3.1).

[60] For which Genette's model is not adequate, as Richardson argues (2002, 47–48).

[61] In 3.2, 3.6, 4.2.4, and 4.4, respectively, below.

[62] Sternberg (1992).

surprise is *always* linked to an open future with the focus on its features as unexpected and disruptive, whose emergence does not explain, but startles and unsettles.

Turning to studies with a focus on readerly experiences, I would single out Phelan (2007) which bridges narrative theory with the experience of reading and makes readerly responses central to what constitutes narrative experience. Phelan systematises such responses through a model based on the functions of judgements (interpretive, ethical, and aesthetic) and progressions (relying on textual dynamics).[63] Dannenberg (2004) and (2008) explore the concept of ontological plotting according to which realist narrative fiction employs alternative possible worlds appearing to take place either in the past or the future through the mode of temporal orchestration.[64] Caracciolo's (2014) monograph on the experientiality of narrative draws mainly on the framework of enactive cognition. More specifically, the study draws on Ricoeur's three-tiered approach to probe a theoretical discussion with the argument that 'our engagement with narrative representations can only be understood within an experiential network that includes both our background and our reactions to stories.'[65] Although my scope and material is quite different from Caracciolo's, there is common focus on how and why readerly and spectatorial experiences are shaped by narrative representations.

The significance of Ricoeur's narrative theory and of the works in its wake mentioned above lies in the fact that they provide a framework with which we can distance ourselves not only from historical specificity but also from the so-called transhistorical character of Greek tragedy.[66] According to the first, the *Oresteia* needs to be approached as culturally specific, composed by Aeschylus as a tetralogy for the purpose of performance (διδασκαλία) in the Athenian dramatic festival of Great Dionysia in 458 BCE. According to the second, the meaning of the *Oresteia* is not historically and culturally specific but universal, one and the same for all ages (an example of that would be Aristotle's καθόλου in the *Poetics*, 1451b5–10).

[63] See Chapters 6 ('Suspense') and 7 ('Surprise') where the term 'narrative progression' is central to my argument. See also Phelan (2002).

[64] See further Chapter 5 on *Sideshadowing* below, where the matter of alternative futures is explored (under section 5.4.3).

[65] Caraciollo (2014) 48 n. 3.

[66] For an overview of these two approaches, see Michelakis (2013) 172 and n. 1–2.

While I do not underestimate the significance of the original historical context in interpreting the *Oresteia*, I consider this only part of a larger process which includes the *Oresteia*'s ancient and modern reception. An example from the discipline of the philosophy of history and literary theory, which argues that, even in historical narratives, narrative discourse must be prioritised over historical representation, is Hayden White's *The Content of the Form*.[67] White argues that the narrative discourse *constructs* historical meaning and breaks the boundaries between the literary and the historical (according to White historical narratives do not seek to represent objective historical facts).[68] Following a similar logic, I argue that we need to focus our attention on *how* narrative imagination in the *Oresteia* constructs meaning through language-based, plot-driven stories, which consist of both real and unreal events.

If we now turn to the issue of the universality of Greek tragedy, I also take distance from arguments which consider it as something that withstands the passing of time or even stands outside time. What I mean by the phrase 'across time', in the opening lines of this Introduction, is not that there is a timeless, singular meaning of the *Oresteia.* It would be impossible for a work to deliver the exact same message *even* for contemporary readers or spectators, who may well have divergent views. Rather, I argue that 'across time' refers to anyone who lives in history, anticipating the future and being subject to its uncertainties, and comes across the *Oresteia*. It is only in this sense that one (anyone) can understand and become engaged with the necessities and probabilities or improbabilities of its plot.[69]

I will now briefly address two aspects of the historical specificity of the *Oresteia* which are usually related to the preoccupations of Greek tragedy with time: the familiarity of the original audience with the earlier literary and artistic tradition, and the historical context of the original production of the tetralogy.

As far as the original audience's familiarity with earlier accounts concerned, the *Oresteia* deals with well-known mythological material which would have been widely reproduced and circulated in literature and art before its stage representation in 458 BCE. In this context, Aeschylus' *Oresteia* enters into dialogue with a large set of earlier texts including

[67] White (1987).

[68] See in particular, White (1987) 1–25.

[69] See under 4.2.1 'The Watchman' below for a brief example of how Bal's model of crisis-form applied to the *Oresteia* demonstrates that the narrativization of crisis in *dramatic* narrative can transcend the temporal confines of different historical periods.

the *Odyssey*, the *Cypria*, Stesichorus' *Oresteia*, and Pindar's *Pythian* 11.[70] The *Agamemnon*, the *Libation Bearers*, the *Eumenides* at a lesser extent, and, probably, *Proteus*, drawing on the material of the previous tradition, dramatise and re-invent the most popular aspects of the myth of the Atreides.[71] What did fifth-century spectators know before the staging of new plays? What did they not know? What was the range of the audience? Was the audience homogeneous? Such questions have plagued scholarly debates both in antiquity and in modern times. In the fourth century BCE, while Aristotle argues that the plots were not widely known, and this is the reason why the poets should not seek 'adherence to the traditional plots' (1451b23–26), Antiphanes claims, evidently with comic bias, that tragic plays work only as reminders for what the audience knows already, as opposed to comedy where everything is invented.[72] Oliver Taplin calls the tendency to privilege the original audience a 'dogma' which promotes several misconceived inferences: 'that Greek tragedy was a repository of traditional tales, that the dramatist's composition is 'dictated by the myth', that there is no element of suspense or surprise, that the tragedy is the working out of fate or destiny, that the characters are puppets of the gods. All these clichés I regard as more or less wrong.'[73] Even if we had access to what each and every member of the original audience knew and thought, saw and heard, we would be still dealing with the fact that they were subject to all the uncertainties that the dramatic narrative generates as a result of the process of configuring a story anew.

A clear example of how tragedy can engage with the historical realities of fifth-century Athens would be the *Eumenides*. This takes us to the second aspect of the issue of the historical specificity of Greek tragedy. In contrast with the other plays of the tetralogy, the associations built into the dramatic frame of the *Eumenides* such as the foundation of the institution of the Areopagus court and the cult of the Eumenides showcase powerful connections with the historical present and future of fifth-century Athens. Those issues have led to extensive

[70] On the literary sources of the myth of the Atreides, see Raeburn & Thomas (2011) xii–xxv; Sommerstein (2010c^2) 136–45; Goward (2005) 43–47; Garvie (1986) ix–xxvi; Gantz (1993) 664–85; Prag (1985), *LIMC* e.g., s.v. Agamemnon (I), Klytaimestra (V). On Aeschylus and Homer, see Sommerstein (2010c^2) 241–53; on Aeschylus and Stesichorus, see Bowie (2015) 113–20. On the ancient sources of Orestes' mythical character, see Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 19–21.

[71] On the matter of Aeschylus' innovation in the *Eumenides*, see Dunn (1996) 211 n. 24.

[72] Antiphanes fr. 191 *PCG*.

[73] Taplin (2003^2) 119. Another scholar who succinctly grounds the same idea is Sommerstein (2010a, 209–23). In the same context, see van Erp Taalman Kip's detailed study (1990).

discussions and contested views.[74] For instance, the original production of the tetralogy just a few years after Ephialtes' reformations has led Anthony Podlecki to remark that the play 'was anchored to the Athenian present',[75] while Barbara Goward has shown how the play might have returned the audience to the present outside the world of the theatre.[76] However, I argue that such interpretations can inevitably be speculative because of the 'intricacy, density, and inconsistency' of a script which, as Edith Hall points out, is 'troublesome, slippery, and evasive'.[77] I argue that one should take these interpretations into account as attestations of the tetralogy's long and complex reception history, and not as secure or authoritative guidelines for the interpretation of the plays.

Finally, a clarification is needed with regard to how I use the phrase 'reader(s) and spectators' (or 'spectator(s) and reader(s)') in this dissertation. According to Ricoeur's definition of mimesis 3, 'mimetic activity does not reach its intended term through the dynamism of the poetic text alone' and 'requires a spectator or reader'.[78] This quote illustrates that, although the distinction between spectators and readers does not disappear completely in mimesis 3, separating out the two terms lies outside the parameters of Ricoeur's analysis. In the scholarship of Greek drama, the differences between reading and spectating audiences have of course generated long debate around the question of whether 'every significant action is indicated in the performance script.'[79] As my methodological approach is aligned with Ricoeur's mimesis 3, the introduction of any categorical distinctions between the reader and the spectator would defeat the purpose of this analysis which is to *bring together* the *historical spectator* with the *implied reader* as the one that is 'never precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the

[74] Sommerstein (1989) 25–32; Wallace (1989); Podlecki (1989) 17–21; Macleod (1982). On the institution of the Eumenides as a divergence from popular religion, see Mikalson (1991) 214–17. For the political context of the *Oresteia*, see Parara (2010).

[75] Podlecki (1989) 17.

[76] Goward (1999) 55–56.

[77] Hall (2015) 263.

[78] Ricoeur (1984, I) 46.

[79] See in particular Taplin (1977) e.g., 28 & (1995); Revermann (2006) e.g., 46–65. See also Michelakis (2006) 216–17.

individual disposition of the reader',[80] and, in my case, *the implied spectator* as well.[81] Therefore, throughout my dissertation I have demonstrated that replacing the phrase 'reader(s) *and* spectator(s)' by either 'reader(s)' *or* 'spectator(s)' is not only unnecessary but also insufficient.

Throughout my study I explore the issue of the future in dramatic narrative by bringing side by side examples of ancient and modern criticism. Some examples will help illustrate the key aspects that inform the six chapters that follow regarding the concepts of *foreshadowing*, *sideshadowing*, *telos*, *closure*, *suspense*, and *surprise*. More detailed theoretical analysis can be found in the introductory sections of the chapters themselves.

Although, as suggested in the opening paragraphs of this Introduction, Aristotle's *Poetics* does not deal extensively with the issue of (future) temporalities in his discussion of the qualities of a tragic work, it does, nevertheless, introduce critical terms which can be useful when thinking about the function of the future in the plot. Here I refer to three distinct but interlinked issues. First, one of the most significant contributions of the *Poetics* to literary and narrative theory is the argument for the prominence of the plot (often over the characters, e.g. 1450a19–24).[82] By situating the dynamics of the plot as a primary value of the tragic poetry, a series of matters which are intrinsically linked to the future emerge: expected and unexpected turns of future events, and, in general, future action. Second, the idea that the tragic work must have *beginning*, *middle*, and *end*, and must be *complete* (e.g., 1450b25–34) again suggests a teleological understanding of the plot. My third point follows up directly from the second, and has to do with Aristotle's strong interest in spectatorial and readerly responses to tragedy to which the *Poetics* often returns.[83] In Aristotle, as in Ricoeur, two different temporalities are at play, and, thus, for my purposes, two different futures interact: one within the plot and one outside the plot. Other terms that appear in Aristotle's *Poetics* and are useful in this respect are *probability* and *necessity* (e.g., 1451a12–14), which have to do with the followability and coherence of the plot. These terms invite reflection on how readers and spectators view,

[80] Iser (1972) 279, discussed by Ricoeur (1985, II). On this front, Ricoeur draws on both Iser and Jauss: 'For both [Iser and Jauss], the text is a set of instructions that the individual reader or the reading public executes in a passive or a creative way' (1984, I, 77).

[81] See also Lowe (2000) 267 in Glossary, s.v. reader: 'The mind that processes a text – including here the audience or spectator of an oral, iconic, or audiovisual text.'

[82] Lowe (2000) ix–xiii.

[83] Liveley (2019) 38, 50. See also n. 27 and n. 53 above.

anticipate, or, otherwise, access the future of the plot, and, for that reason, they need to be linked to the concepts of *suspense* and *surprise*, but as well as of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*.

Drawing on the earlier literary tradition, including Aristotle, and going beyond it, the ancient scholia demonstrate interest in several critical concepts which need to be linked to the exploration of the future in dramatic narrative. René Nünlist's study on that demonstrates what the marginal comments in manuscripts of Greek literary texts have to offer. Nünlist's organisation of material around critical terms and concepts facilitates their connection to and juxtaposition with modern concepts of literary criticism, and this is an approach I have sought to draw on and develop further in Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7.[84] Terms such as πρόληψις, προαναφώνησις, and προέκθεσις are all clearly related to the modern idea of narrative prolepsis (Chapter 5). The term ἀγωνία contributes to the concept of *suspense* (Chapter 6), while the term οἰκονομία as the postponement of the climax of the plot is associated not only with *suspense* (Chapter 6) but also with *surprise* (Chapter 7). Finally, the ancient scholia also touch on issues of *closure* (Chapter 3), discussing as they do the future of the plot and how it can be found either 'internal[ly] to the main narrative or external[ly], alluding to an event falling outside of the narrative but within the compass of its wider story arc'.[85] Although I try to pursue such connections throughout the thesis, there are two serious drawbacks in the use of ancient scholia as a source for my analysis. First and foremost, the extant scholia to Aeschylus' tragedies are minimal when compared to those on Sophocles and Euripides, and their primary focus on textual issues rather than on literary criticism reduces the usefuleness. In addition to that, references to the future are scattered across a whole range of different terms and forms of expression that require systematisation and analysis. These vary from future participial expressions from μέλλω, to the future of εἰμί, adjectival phrases with χρόνος or without χρόνος (usually with the participle μέλλω), and syntactic and modal future-constructions within the Greek mood and tense system. As a result, my use of scholia is at once selective and cautious.

[84] See especially sections 3.2, 5.2, 6.2 and 7.2.

[85] Liveley (2019) 104.

Turning now to modern literary criticism, I will first refer briefly to three scholars of the second half of the twentieth century who have heavily influenced several disciplines, opened up new paths to critical thinking, and informed several works on which I draw. The cultural and literary theorist Roland Barthes has thoroughly impacted the way we interpret texts in general, as he has argued for the literary autonomy of the text and the production of multiple meanings and interpretations through reading, instead of a single and fixed meaning.[86] The literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin has coined the term 'essential surplus of knowledge' as the narrator's advantageous accessibility to the plot,[87] which in the case of Greek tragedy raises interesting questions regarding the absence of an external narrator: this surplus can be attributed to special characters (in our case Cassandra) but also to readers and spectators who are or become aware of patterns that escape the characters, through *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*. Finally, Umberto Eco has formulated and developed the terms *open* and *closed*. In Eco's system of ideas, while an *open* text is a work of literature which encourages the reader to interpret in multiple ways, a *closed* text urges them for a particular interpretation.[88] Eco's works and definitions favour the interpretation of the reader and, in my case, the spectator, and, as a result, they have strongly influenced the way I use the terms *open* and *closed* with regard to the ideas of *open future* and *closed future*, which feature prominently in my dissertation. The quote below from Eco's *The Open Work* wraps up the issues discussed in this section, bridging modern and ancient literary theories:

> A work of art, therefore, is a corn-piece and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unalterable specificity. Hence, every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself.[89]

[86] Barthes (1977).

[87] Bakhtin (1981).

[88] Eco (1962/1989).

[89] Eco (1962/1989) 4.

Two studies of the last thirty years which move across the boundaries of literary criticism and philosophy of time have informed my thesis in a more direct manner. The first is Gary Saul Morson's *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (1994), where *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* feature as significant literary concepts closely related to the future, as this is viewed and expected by readers and spectators. This is how they both contemplate narrative structure and find themselves at the same cognitive and emotional state as the dramatic characters. This is what Morson calls *double temporality*, based on the double experience of future time,[90] which is similar to what Ricoeur argues for the involvement of the readers as simultaneously active and passive: they become deeply engaged by both action and reception.[91] While *foreshadowing* as a literary technique casts *a shadow* of *the* future upon the present, providing foreknowledge, *sideshadowing* (the term was coined by both Morson and Michael Bernstein) casts *shadows* from the *side* upon the present, generating *several* future possibilities.[92] Such explorations have given me the opportunity to examine future temporality in the *Oresteia* in a way that goes beyond deterministic approaches, where the future can only be seen as past.

The second, more recent, study is Duncan Kennedy's *Antiquity and the Meanings of Time* (2013), which has been mentioned earlier as one of the few contributions from the area of classical studies exploring the issue of temporality. Kennedy's work regularly returns to Ricoeur's main observation that time is understood and experienced in narrative terms.[93] The usefulness of this study for my dissertation lies not only in its approach but also in its focus on Greek tragedy, and more specifically, on Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*.[94] Kennedy, drawing on Morson's notion of double temporality, directs his attention to the tension between experiencing time and observing time as a characteristic which can be found in life (and not only in literature), where 'individuals may come to insert themselves to narrative structures and to see themselves as characters emplotted (by themselves, by some higher power or by some idea) in such a way that they view their actions as in some way (pre-)determined.'[95] The

[90] Morson (1994) 61.

[91] Ricoeur (1988, III) 166–67.

[92] On *sideshadowing* in Morson (1994), see 117–72; Bernstein (1994).

[93] Kennedy (2013) x.

[94] Kennedy (2013) 84–118.

[95] Kennedy (2013) 84.

paradigm of Oedipus demonstrates the economy, in Kennedy's words, of the binary 'free will and determinism', one of the predominant issues in discussions of Greek tragedy,[96] or, in narrative terms, the 'contingency (open future) and fate (closed future)'. This is reinforced by the absence of narrators in drama: the story is 'told' entirely through the speeches of the characters unfolding simultaneously for them and the readers and spectators, regardless of their spatial and temporal distance.[97] Kennedy's argument takes us back to Bakhtin's idea of the 'essential surplus of knowledge', which can be, in some cases, shared by the characters as well.[98] Examples of characters who see their future as predetermined are Cassandra (who also has the essential surplus of knowledge) in the *Agamemnon*, and Orestes in the *Libation Bearers*. Finally, the act of interpretation itself does not necessarily take us away from contingency, even if it involves a teleological way of understanding. As Kennedy remarks: 'As you exit the theatre, can you be *entirely clear* that you have stepped outside the metaphysical discourses which intersect Oedipus?'[99]

I conclude my discussion of methodological issues by introducing two works from the philosophy of history which focus on ideas of time, while also crossing the boundaries of different types of texts and narratives. The studies on which I draw offer systematic explorations of the ideas of *telos*, *change*, *transition*, *experience*, and *expectation*, which are central to my discussion of the *Oresteia* and, as a result, I will be returning to them throughout the dissertation.

The first study is Reinhart Koselleck's monograph *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*.[100] Its specific focus on how the future was seen and shaped in the past makes it particularly relevant for my discussion. In particular, Koselleck has examined 'how expectations, hopes, or prognoses that are projected into the future become articulated into language' and 'how in a given present, the temporal dimensions of past and future are related'.[101] In doing so, he has set the foundations for a non-linear approach to the future. One dimension of this approach can be seen in the term *futures past*, which conceptualises the idea

[96] Vernant (1988) 49–84; Vidal-Naquet (1986) 39–60.

[97] Kennedy (2013) 101.

[98] Kennedy (2013) 86.

[99] My emphasis. Kennedy (2013) 100.

[100] Koselleck (2004).

[101] Koselleck (2004) 3.

that each present was *once* an imagined future.[102] Closely linked to the term *futures past* are two concepts which are central to this study, namely horizon of *expectation* and space of *experience*. These concepts do not refer to different temporalities. Rather they are incorporated into one another.[103] Koselleck argues that such considerations may help us place ourselves within a temporality organised by human thought and limits as much as by the contingencies of uncontrolled events. Adapting Koselleck's terminology, I use the term *future present* in an attempt to show that, whereas *futures past* refers to the pastness of the future, my focus is on the lived experience of the future in the *present*, as it manifests itself in the tetralogy. As we will see in the chapters that follow, despite the large chronological and cultural gap that separates Koselleck's view on the future from Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, there are similarities in how they both approach the concept of *telos* as an aspect of the future, which make it possible to relate the two with one another.

Jonas Grethlein's monograph *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography: 'Futures Past' from Herodotus to Augustine* elaborates on Koselleck's *futures past* to demonstrate that in historical narrative the tension between experiential and teleological approaches constitutes 'the core of our interest to the past'[104] as a way of coming to terms with the uncertainties of the future.[105] In this context, Grethlein uses Koselleck's term *future past* to describe the temporal asymmetry between historical agents and historians. According to this asymmetry, the historiographer is on the vantage point of knowing the events relating to the historical agent (*telos* for Grethlein), and everything in the history that she or he writes about drives towards that point. Although Grethlein argues that teleology is closer to historiography than it is to fiction, I argue that the narrative of the *Oresteia* has teleological implications that transcend the polarity between historiography and fiction, and also the polarity between *telos* and experience.

[102] Translation of the term *Vergangene Zukunft* (xi, n. 13). First published in German (1979).

[103] See in particular, Koselleck (2004) 255–75.

[104] Grethlein (2013a) 3, 5.

[105] Grethlein (2013a). See also (2014), (2016).

1.3. The *Oresteia* as a tetralogy: a case study

In this concluding section of the Introduction, I will present the *Oresteia* as my case study and explore my main reasons for this. I will then turn to a brief overview of earlier approaches to time in Aeschylus. Finally, I will offer an overview of the six chapters that follow.

There are two main reasons that I have chosen Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. First, I argue that explorations of the future in three thematically connected tragic narratives and in what can be gleaned from the narrative of the satyr drama *Proteus* (of which seventeen words have survived)[106] provide important insights into the complexity of the issue of time in Aeschylus. Second, I contend that these narratives invite us to reflect on how the time of the story coexists and interacts with their narrated time (the time of the viewer and the reader) in ways that go well beyond the findings of earlier studies. Despite my focus on the *Oresteia* as the major text, I also draw attention to how it works as a paradigm. Throughout this study, I treat the *Oresteia* not as an exception but as an opportunity to develop methodological tools that can be applied to other Greek plays as well.

The tendency to think of the *Oresteia* as a trilogy rather than a tetralogy can be understood from the scholarly focus on single, complete plays, and on the uniqueness of three interlinked plays.[107] This has resulted in the neglect of the *Proteus* and its implications for the scope of the narrative.[108] By considering the *Oresteia* as a trilogy rather than as a tetralogy, one reads and interprets the *Eumenides* as the final play. However, situating the *Eumenides* in the third and not the final place opens up a number of interpretative opportunities with regard to its preoccupations with the future. My discussion of the future in *Proteus* can only be speculative, of course, but it makes it possible to speak of a satyr drama which *completes* the tetralogy, instead of speaking about a satyr drama which follows on from a tragic trilogy. This approach allows us to go beyond an analysis of *Proteus* as a sequel of the preceding tragedies. Explorations of how Aeschylus' satyr drama might have been connected to the rest of the

[106] See hypothesis of the *Agamemnon*, *TrGF* III F 210–15. For reconstructions, see Sommerstein (2010a, 135–36), also in (2010b); Griffith (2002); Sutton (1984). For further bibliography on *Proteus*, see also Marshall (2015) 79 n. 72. On satyr drama in general (including bibliography), see O'Sullivan and Collard (2013); Krumeich, Pechstein, & Seidensticker (1999); Easterling (1997) 37–44; Seaford (1984) 1–48; Sutton (1980).

[107] For the tetralogies in fifth-century BCE Athens, see Sommerstein (2010c[2]) 32–44; Gantz (1980), (1979).

[108] For the generalized downplay of the satyr drama, see Griffith (2002) 195 and n. 1 with bibliography.

tetralogy highlight the complex temporal relations among the four plays and discourage approaches based exclusively on linearity.[109]

The six main chapters of this study (Chapters 2–7) provide distinct yet interlinked approaches and perspectives on the topic of the future in the *Oresteia*. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 undertake an analysis of the concept of *telos*, as its prominence in the tetralogy has significant implications which pervade the broader scope of the whole dissertation. These chapters offer a three-stage approach to *telos*, arguing for the need to disentangle its complex and wide-ranging associations. In Chapter 2 the three tragic plays are subjected to rigorous linguistic analysis. Mapping the lexical occurrences of τέλος and its cognates[110] onto Seaford's model of τέλος demonstrates two things: they oscillate between *purpose* and *fulfilment* and signify notions of deferral and crisis as well. In Chapter 3 the meaning of *telos* as ending is explored through a more narratologically oriented analysis. This takes on board not only the linguistic fabric of the narrative but also its interwoven structures as they emerge from the plot. In this Chapter, I argue that the idea of *telos* as ending needs to be identified not only with the idea of a complete closure of the plays driven by necessity and desire, but also with the possibilities and inconclusiveness of an open future. Chapter 4 completes my analysis of *telos* by introducing two important concepts, *future present* and *present future*. My argument is that the universe of the *Oresteia* does not limit itself to representations of the future which are only textual or narratorial, but it encompasses considerations of the future related to broader aspects of human life: to reflect on and construct the future (*present future*) and to be subjected to its invasive character (*future present*). Chapter 5 demonstrates how, through the techniques of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*, the dramatic narrative manipulates the characters' and the audiences' expectations in unforeseen ways, challenging their understanding of an *open* or a *closed future*. This unpredictability of the future features prominently in Chapters 6 and 7 as well, where the concepts of *suspense* and *surprise* are explored. These two chapters are organised around two narrative movements, *narrative progression* and *narrative misdirection*, and around two models of narrative engagement, governed by immersion, for the anticipation of the future events of the plot, and by cognition, for their being experienced and understood. Throughout the six chapters, my discussion puts under examination a wide selection of

[109] See sections 3.6 ('Closure as desire in *Proteus*') and 4.5 ('*Proteus* between *present future* and *future present*').

[110] For a lexical inventory of the τέλος-headwords in the *Oresteia*, see Appendix: Τέλος-headwords in the *Oresteia*.

scenes, with some of them becoming central to more than one chapter (e.g. the 'Cassandra scene' in the *Agamemnon*, or the scene of Orestes' hesitation before the matricide in the *Libation Bearers*). This approach demonstrates the benefits of considering the dense narrative of the *Oresteia* from multiple perspectives.

Finally, a note on editions and translations. In the interest of remaining concise I quote from the text of Aeschylus only when I engage with it linguistically. The text is cited from Alan Sommerstein's Loeb Edition (2008). Unless stated otherwise, the translation cited is of Christopher Collard (2002), which follows the Greek more closely. I use the Latinised version of all names throughout. Key Greek terms have been italicised only when transliterated (such as *telos*).

2

Telos as purpose and fulfilment

2.1. Introduction

Telos as a term has a wide semantic range which in the *Oresteia* varies from the literal and mundane to the complex and conceptual.[1] *Telos* embraces meanings of 'consummation', 'supreme power', 'decision', 'doom', 'duty', 'offerings to the gods', 'degree or state of completion', 'end as finish or cessation', 'achievement', and 'attainment'.[2] This plurality has been at the centre of Frits Waanders' study which focuses on the lexical spectrum of τέλος and τελέω from Homer to the end of fifth century BCE, and demonstrates the centrality of *telos* for the archaic and classical authors.[3]

In this Chapter, this plethora of meanings of *telos* is revisited with the help of Seaford's 2012 discussion of *telos* in which the *tel-* root is mapped onto the inter-related spheres of *completion*, *payment*, *ritual*, and *authority* (2.2).[4] These four categories make possible a comprehensive overview of the semantics of τέλος in the *Oresteia*. However, they cannot capture the teleological implications of Aeschylus' plays in their full power. It is only by turning to hermeneutics and to the multi-layered interweaving of different semantic categories that readers and spectators can begin to engage with a thorough understanding of

[1] For a lexical inventory of the τέλος-headwords in the *Oresteia*, see Appendix: Τέλος-headwords in the *Oresteia*.

[2] *LSJ*[9] s.v. τέλος. See also Lebeck (1971) 71 and n. 38, with reference to Boisacq (1950).

[3] On the meanings of τέλος in Aeschylus, see Waanders (1983) 85–89, 96–99.

[4] See Seaford (2012) 125–222.

the narrative (2.3). I then demonstrate how those findings are intertwined with the future as a concept, which explains why I situate this discussion at the beginning of my thesis. It should be noted that none of the seventeen surviving words of *Proteus* can shed light on how the last play of the tetralogy might have dealt with these issues at the level of diction.

The preoccupation of the *Oresteia* with τέλος and its cognates was first observed in 1939 by William Stanford: 'the whole play [the *Agamemnon*] is full of references to differently conceived τέλη'.[5] Almost three decades later, Ulrich Fischer undertook a much more detailed discussion of the concept of *telos* in the dramaturgy of Aeschylus. Fischer's study, despite its perceptiveness, remains limited in scope, as it mainly focuses on the concept of *telos* as goal related with the divine.[6] In her 1970s seminal work on the *Oresteia*, Anne Lebeck analysed further the significance of τέλος and the complexities around its usage in this narrative.[7] More specifically, Lebeck notes:

> In the case of τέλος the number of possible meanings is multiplied several times, thus making it more difficult to determine the thematic importance of the word. This much is certain: the meaning of τέλος which is significant for the trilogy as a whole, that against which every secondary meaning plays, is a religious one. It is difficult to be more precise. τέλος denotes the fulfilment or consummation of one's destiny, the end of a process of becoming, the completion of a cycle. Marriage is a τέλος, initiation into the mysteries is a τέλος, death is a τέλος. All these associations are evoked each time the word occurs.[8]

Although the studies above paved the way for further explorations of *telos* in the *Oresteia*, only two, more recent, attempts have returned to the topic, the studies by Seaford and Godlhill.[9] Goldhill's influential but brief paper examines the various meanings and ambiguities of *telos*

[5] Stanford (1939) 157 and n. 1. See also Kenneth Burke's remark: '[V]ariants of the word for completion, fulfilment, run through this trilogy like an *idée fixe*' (1952, 390).

[6] Fischer (1965); *telos* is explored in relation to three different areas of influence: *telos* as fixed by humans (technical level), as fixed by fate (fateful-demonic level), and as fulfilled through the divine power (divine level). For criticisms of Fischer's model, see Goldhill (1984b, briefly in 170–71 n. 1), Ambrose (1967), Lebeck (1967), Fitton-Brown (1965).

[7] See, indicatively, Lebeck (1971) 68–73 and n. 42.

[8] Lebeck (1971) 72. See also Lebeck (1983) 81–82.

[9] See 1.1.

and its cognates in the tragic trilogy.[10] It also raises the issue of the reductive nature of earlier studies of the topic, arguing that *telos* is under-theorised and noting that 'this analysis, which could be extended, is offered to point towards the problematic relation between the present and the future, structured towards a telos'.[11] While this article provides useful insights for the discussion that follows, it is, however, quite restricted in textual references and limited in terms of developing a conceptual framework.

Seaford's study has been briefly discussed at the beginning of this Chapter and will be further considered in what follows. As mentioned above, in the following section I will present how the *telos* words of the Oresteia can be classified under Seaford's four semantic categories: *telos* as 'completion', as 'ritual', as 'payment', and as 'authority'.[12] Then, in 2.3, I will explain how and why this classification, linked to Seaford's broader set of interests in space and time in Aeschylus, can only be located at beginning of my more focused study of the future.

2.2. Τέλος in the *Oresteia* through Seaford's categories

2.2.1. Τέλος as 'completion'

'Completion' is defined by Seaford as the positive sense of 'fulfilment'[13] and the negative sense of 'limitation' or 'ending'. While the semantic category of τέλος as 'completion' is underlying in most occurrences of *telos* in the *Oresteia*, I will here include the ones in which this meaning is predominant.

In the first example, the Carpet scene of the *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra implies Agamemnon's death using the participle of the verb τελευτῶ: 'The man to call blest with success is the man | who **ended** his life (βίον **τελευτήσαντ**') in precious well-being' (928–29). Later on, the meaning of τέλος takes the positive sense of fulfilment. Having witnessed

[10] Goldhill (1984b).

[11] Goldhill (1984b) 171, also 169–70 and n. 1.

[12] Seaford (2012) 127.

[13] For the motif of fulfilment in the *Oresteia*, see Roberts (1985) with further bibliography.

Clytemnestra's prayer to Zeus (972–74), the elderly men respond employing the word τελεσφόρος, the compound adjective from τέλος, as 'bringing fulfilment', which plays an important role in this and the following play.[14] At lines 996–1000 it is used twice in close proximity:

> with my mind correct | in judgement, my heart whirls round | **at the fulfilment to come** (**τελεσφόροις** δίναις). | I pray that my expectations | turn out false and **do not come to be fulfilled** (**εἰς τὸ μὴ τελεσφόρον**).

The first use of τελεσφόρος by the Chorus manifests their cognitive and emotional alignment with the turns of the plot. They perceive that the fulfilment of Clytemnestra's *telos* is coming closer and that her prior invocation cannot be refuted. For this reason, they activate wishful thinking, hoping that their grim expectations will not come true. Nonetheless, Clytemnestra will soon prove her quality as τελεσφόρος, as one who brings fulfilment, a quality that, as we shall see, will also be demonstrated by Orestes in the *Libation Bearers*.

In the 'Cassandra scene' (1035–330),[15] τέλος as 'completion' and 'fulfilment' appears several times (1107, 1109, 1202, 1253). First, it is employed to define the nature of Cassandra's prophecies. Cassandra uses two cognates while witnessing the undertaking of a murder, the verb τελῶ for the act of the crime and the noun τέλος for the murder itself (1107–9):

> Cruel woman, will you **take this to its end** (**τελεῖς**)? | After you bathe the husband clean | who shares your bed— how shall I speak of the **end** (**τέλος**)?

Considering the uses of τέλος by Clytemnestra above, Cassandra's use of τέλος and of τελεῖς, with its morphological ambiguity (it can be construed both as present tense and as future tense), signifies the simultaneous enactment of purpose *and* fulfilment. These two occurrences represent a 'new affliction' (1101) which is anticipated and will lead things to their fulfilment while also being presented as a consequence of the past crimes that took place in the house

[14] For occurrences of τελεσφόρος elsewhere in Greek tragedy, see Garvie (1986) on 212.

[15] For an extensive bibliography on the 'Cassandra scene', see Pillinger (2019); Mitchell-Boyask (2006) 270 n. 2.

(1090–92, 1095–97). Fraenkel argues that, although Cassandra has started to complete the jigsaw of her visions, the precise events involved in the use of word τέλος remain obscure:

> πῶς φράσω τέλος does not mean that she has difficulty in finding the right expression: the τέλος at which Clytemnestra's actions are aimed is not yet perceptible to Cassandra when she speaks these words, however much she may fear the outcome of this action (1107 τόδε) which she sees before her…In using the present tense [προτείνει] Cassandra returns from the possibilities of the future to what her vision shows her now.[16]

According to the above quote, the nature and content of the action prophesied will stay unspecified for another seven lines, and the prophetess will shortly fill in any gaps, while the perpetrator fulfils their goal. However, I argue that the barrier does not lie between Cassandra and her access to the future, but between Cassandra and her communication with the Chorus. Her question 'how shall I speak of **the end**?' is not a genuine question based on Cassandra's not-yet-discovery of the future, but it is a rhetorical question which is articulated because of the unspeakable spectacle she encounters. As Pillinger notes, 'the word *telos*…describes not only the goal, the action that provides the 'end' of the story, but also the 'crux' of the matter.'[17] The murder is committed by a woman they all know: the not-yet-named Clytemnestra is trapping Agamemnon in a robe in his bath and is striking him.[18]

In the *Libation Bearers* the adjective τελεσφόρος appears two times in the sense of fulfilment (212, 541). In the first instance, Orestes, who is disguised, asks Electra to pray for a successful future, on the grounds that her earlier requests regarding the return of her brother as the avenger '**are** now **fulfilled**' (**τελεσφόρους** ευχάς, 212). The second occurrence is also spoken by Orestes who applies it to himself this time, and it is associated with his reaction to Clytemnestra's dream as narrated by the Chorus. Orestes, eager for the Chorus to complete their narration, asks: 'And the **end** of her story (**τελευτᾷ**)? Its culmination?' (534).[19] The

[16] Fraenkel (1950, II) on 1100.

[17] Pillinger (2019) 48.

[18] Cassandra's prophecies are explored in detail in section 6.3.1. 'Suspense through foreknowledge'.

[19] Sommerstein (2008) follows West's interchange between 528 and 534 (1990). Cf. Garvie (1986), Collard (2002) and Brown (2018). The main reason why I adopt West's correction is that Orestes' question about the end of the story refers to the upcoming matricide and not to the dream.

narration of the dream is concluded with a transition to 'real time', when Clytemnestra awakens just before the snake's fatal attack, as in the entrance song.[20] Orestes seizes the opportunity and reveals his urge to bring the *telos* himself by becoming τελεσφόρος: 'I pray to Earth here, then, and to my father's tomb | that this dream **may be fulfilled** (**τελεσφόρον**) for me' (540–41). Apparently, what the dream has left unfulfilled will be completed by Orestes as the *telos bearer*. Apart from bearing the *telos* of Clytemnestra's murder as τελεσφόρος, Orestes will also perform his own *telos* as the *rite de passage* through the upcoming act of the matricide.[21] This aspect will be further discussed in the next section.

In the *Eumenides*, the first occurrence of τέλος is through the participle τελουμένας, from the verb τελοῦμαι. This is uttered by Orestes and reflects the semantic category of 'fulfilment' to mean 'to be performed' or 'to be executed', referring to Apollo's oracle:[22] 'and it [the oracle] spoke of further | visitations from Furies, **exacted** (**τελουμένας**) for a father's blood' (283–84). Qualifying 'visitations', τελουμένας describes the nature of the relationship between the Furies and Orestes in case he does not avenge his father's murderers: as the meaning of τελουμένας shows, the punishment will be inescapable. The same participle recurs after Aegisthus' murder when the Chorus responds to the victim's cries, in close proximity with τέλος, with both expressing finality: 'Let us stand aside from the business **as it reaches** | **fulfilment** (**τελουμένου**), so as to seem innocent of these troubles; the issue | of the fight **has** surely **been decided** (**κεκύρωται τέλος**)!' (872–74). The Chorus' repetition of *tel-* words marks the fulfilment of Orestes' deed. The house servant immediately appears on stage to deliver the news that Aegisthus is dead in a way that, if we follow the manuscript's reading, echoes the language of the Chorus: 'Oh, woe, utter woe for our master **struck** | **down** (δεσπότου †**τελουμένου**†, 875–76)!'[23]

[20] I return to Clytemnestra's dream which is analysed from other angles as well in Chapters 4 and 5 below: as a *present future* (4.3.1) and as a *foreshadowing* technique (5.3.3).

[21] Goldhill (1984b) 170 n. 4.

[22] *LSJ*[9] s.v. τελέομαι-οῦμαι. See also Waanders (1983) 85.

[23] The manuscript's reading τελουμένου has been seen with suspicion by a number of scholars. *LSJ* cites it for the meaning of τελοῦμαι as 'come to one's end'. Garvie (1986), Collard (2002), and Brown (2018) support Schütz's correction (1811) πεπληγμένου on the grounds that there is no other evidence of the meaning of τελοῦμαι as 'to be killed'. Fischer (1965, 34 n. 23) argues that πεπληγμένου is supported by πεπληγμένος in line 884 creating a ring effect, and by the parallel use of πέπληγμαι and πεπληγμένος for Agamemnon's murder (*Agamemnon* 1343, 1345). I argue that a similar effect is achieved through the echoing of *tel-* words from 872–74.

The same dynamic of multiple occurrences of τέλος is in operation in the scene around the trial of Orestes where the forensic context complicates the idea of 'judicial completion'.[24] Orestes addresses the image of the goddess Athena declaring that he awaits 'the outcome of judgement' (τέλος δίκης, 243). In doing so, he unites the idea of finality with the idea of justice or judgement.[25] Athena's judgement is supposed to release him of his troubles by fulfilling his prayers. However, as Goldhill points out, the phrase τέλος δίκης can also work towards a different direction: if τέλος means the end, and δίκη alludes to his punishment from the Furies, this might also imply death for Orestes and therefore success for the Furies.[26] Although the same phrase is used by Apollo when he threatens the Furies that they will not 'win the verdict' (οὐκ ἔχουσα τῆς δίκης τέλος, 729), giving τέλος the meaning of fulfilment, the victory of Orestes does not bring with it the destruction of the Furies. Similarly, the Chorus accepts Athena's role as the authority who will judge αἰτίας τέλος as an 'upright judgement' (434).[27] By doing so, they resile from their claim of 'final authority' (see lines 320, 393). This τέλος looks forward to the end of the trial which, nevertheless, does not provide a fulfilment for the Furies. In the same manner, Athena announces that judging this matter is more important than any mortal thinks (470–81). She decides to pass it on to the citizens to judge (483–84) by establishing the 'jurors' duty' (ἐπέσταλται τέλος, 743), but it is her who acquits Orestes with her vote. Finally, the Furies use an antonym of τέλος in legal contexts, ἀτέλειαν (360–61), as the 'immunity' they have offered to the gods, given that the Furies have taken over from them the unpleasant duty of judging and punishing. Technically, ἀτέλεια implies the full authority of the Furies to handle familial murders, but this comes to be violated by the newly established legal system.[28]

2.2.2. Τέλος as 'ritual'

In this section, I present examples of occurrences of τέλος in the context of rituals, such as marriage and prayers, from the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides*. The occurrences of τέλος as

[24] Seaford (2012) 136.

[25] Sommerstein (1989) on 243.

[26] Goldhill (1984b) 172.

[27] Sommerstein's translation (2008).

[28] Sommerstein (2008) & (1989) on 361.

'ritual' in the *Agamemnon* is through the word προτέλεια which is employed by the Chorus twice in the parodos (65, 227) and, then, again in the third choral song (720, second stasimon). Προτέλεια derives from τέλος in the sense of 'goal' and 'rite of marriage', and it means 'actions prior to a goal' and 'prenuptial rites'.[29] In the first example, προτέλεια is used as 'first-rites' (65) for the casualties of the Greeks and the Trojans. The emerging questions are why the human catastrophe at war is referred to as 'first-rites' and what this *telos* is to which rites are needed as preludes. One possible interpretation is that the rites are prenuptial, and, thus, their *telos* is a marriage yet-to-happen. Lebeck comments that 'προτέλεια are the initial sacrifice which culminates in the τέλος of the marriage ceremony.'[30] Jean Bollack has argued that this might be the reunion of Helen and Menelaus, probably dramatised in the *Proteus*, the satyr drama that concludes the *Oresteia* (on which more below).[31] Another possibility is that it alludes to the past and the beginning of the war. In that case the marriage between Helen and Paris might also represent a *telos*;[32] as Stanford notes, it may represent a marriage which 'began with cruel preliminaries.'[33]

The first reference of προτέλεια and its ambiguous meaning discussed above prepares for the second reference (227) which appears in the Chorus' narrative of Iphigenia's sacrifice (184–249, parodos).[34] In this context, προτέλεια is coordinated with ναῶν:

> 'So he [Agamemnon] was hard enough to sacrifice | his daughter, in aid of a war | to punish a woman | and as first-rites for the fleet to sail'. (224–27)

Iphigenia's killing functioned as a προτέλεια for the τέλος of the arrival of the Greek fleet at Troy and the ensuing Trojan war. Additionally, προτέλεια here can also be linked to implications of marriage as a different future for Iphigenia, or as an alleged wishful future as

[29] Waanders (1983) 188–90; *LSJ*[9] s.v. τέλος (I. 6) and s.v. προτέλεια. See also Zeitlin (1965) 465.

[30] Lebeck (1971) 48. Fraenkel (1950, II) on 65. See Lebeck (1983) 81 n. 29, where she correctly criticises Fischer's view that προτέλεια in Aeschylus has nothing to do with marriage.

[31] Bollack (2001) on 65, followed by Sommerstein (2008) on 65 n. 15.

[32] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 63–67; Collard (2002) on 65.

[33] Stanford (1939) 142, where 'a special innuendo' is attributed to the word προτέλεια (as well as to the next reference of the word on 227).

[34] The preoccupations of the parodos of the *Agamemnon* with the future are explored elsewhere as well: under 5.3.1 'Omens, prophecies, oracles', under 6.4.3 'Suspense through action delayed'.

a bait. In this case, it may be possible that προτέλεια brings into mind other versions of the myth, where Iphigenia was lured to Aulis (the point of her sacrifice) on the false promise of the marriage between her and Achilles.[35] There has been a large number of testimonies in several literary texts well-known to the audience of 458 BCE which employ this version of the myth such as the *Cypria*, while it is also dramatised in the much later Euripides' play *Iphigenia in Aulis*.[36] An allusion to this may be found in the *Agamemnon* as well: Clytemnestra accuses Agamemnon for 'treachery' (1524) in her defence speech, after the killings of Agamemnon and Cassandra.[37] As the scene of the sacrifice is revisited and dramatised by the Chorus in their entrance song, its outcome and consequences put προτέλεια in a problematic context and increase the readers' and the spectators' anticipation. In both occurrences of προτέλεια in 65 and 227 the rite which finally secures the safe departure of the fleet is literally and ironically prenuptial.

The last instance of προτέλεια in the *Oresteia* appears in the teleological narrative of the lion cub (717–49) which is embedded in the third choral song (681–782).[38] The word is employed with the meaning of '**first-rites** of its life', which is a metaphorical ritual meaning (ἐν βιότου **προτελείοις**, 720) describing the initially harmless nature of the young lion which is contrasted with what follows:[39] when it reaches the age of maturity, its instincts take over and the lion causes bloodshed for the house (727–34). Through the retrospective lens of the Chorus (the whole narrative is in past tense), the house of the cub can be identified with

[35] Collard (2002) on 65; Sommerstein (2008) on 227 n. 49; Zeitlin (1965) 465–67, 491, 493, 499. Zeitlin does not recognise an allusion to Iphigeneia's sacrifice in line 65, but I cannot see how it is not an allusion, as the same word is used twice in a similar context. On the topic of the conflation of rituals of marriage and death, see Rehm (1994).

[36] See *Cypria* Argumentum 8 at West (2003) 74–75. Although in the *Agamemnon* Iphigenia's sacrifice is not presented as inflicted by any divine force (see discussionsdiscussion in sections 5.3.1, 5.4.1, and 5.4.2), below), in *Cypria* the sacrifice is the result of Artemis' demand. On the literary and iconographic history of Iphigenia's myth, see Michelakis (2006) 21–23; Collard (2002) xx–xxiii; Gantz (1993) 582–88, 685–88; Prag (1985) 61–67, 73; *LIMC* s.v. 'Iphigeneia'.

[37] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 1523–424; Collard (2002) xxiii n. 10, also on 1522–424. Cf. Fraenkel (1950, III) on 1523.

[38] On this as a common metaphor in the fifth-century BCE literature, see Stanford (1958) 194 on 1431b; Fraenkel (1950, II) on 736.

[39] Waanders (1983, 19) s.v. προτέλεια argues that this meaning as 'in its young years' is slightly different than the meaning as 'first-rites' (in the earlier examples), considering the meaning of τέλος as 'maturity'. See also two other words with similar meaning in the *Agamemnon*: ἐντελέων 'in their full prime' (105) and τέλεον 'full-grown' (1504).

Priam's: the destructive end of the Trojan War for the house of Priam was brought about by Helen who was initially welcomed.[40]

The associations of τέλος and its cognates with the fulfilling power of the gods recurs after the murders towards the end of the play. In her description of the act of Agamemnon's murder, Clytemnestra devotes her third and final blow to Zeus the Saviour (Ζεὺς σωτὴρ) as a thanksgiving offer (1386–87). This gesture evokes her earlier prayer to Zeus the master fulfiller (Ζεὺς τέλειος, 972–73) discussed above. Zeus has been transformed from a god with the potential to fulfil the future to a god who has saved Clytemnestra by fulfilling her prayers (1387). The adjective τέλειος as 'indicating fulfilment by the gods' appears again in her invocation of 'Justice **fulfilled** (**τέλειον**)' for her daughter Iphigenia (1432). This use demonstrates another successful divine intervention which assisted her in committing the murder alongside with Ruin and Fury (Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ', 1433). A similar idea is echoed by the Chorus who reiterates that the workings of Zeus' justice prevail (1487): 'For what **is fulfilled** (**τελεῖται**) for mortals without Zeus?'[41] Again, the meaning of the verb τελοῦμαι lies in between the present and the future.

Finally, the adjective τέλειος appears twice in the *Eumenides* in relation to the ritual of invocation. It is first found in the prologue, when Pythia invokes 'Zeus **the Fulfiller**' (**τέλειον**, 28) as one of the divinities to whom the prophetess is indebted for her prophetic seat in Delphi (1–24). Usually, the word τέλειος is employed to address the gods invoking their power to fulfil a prayer, as in the *Agamemnon* where, for example, Clytemnestra invokes 'Zeus **the Fulfiller**' (Ζεῦ Ζεῦ **τέλειε**, 973–74). On the contrary, Pythia's request for fulfilment is here frustrated. Her ritual reverence is violently interrupted by the vision of the Furies some lines later (33) who will soon be occupying the stage. As Goward points out, the monologue gives way to terror.[42] The second occurrence of τέλειος is associated with Hera and her traditional title as the goddess of marriage.[43] Her title and her marriage with Zeus represent the ritual

[40] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 744–49; Lebeck (1971) 48.

[41] This idea can also be observed in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* 823–24: 'What **is fulfilled** (**τέλειόν ἐστιν**) for mortals without you?' For Zeus in the *Agamemnon*, see Smith (1980), Lloyd-Jones (1956).

[42] Goward (1999) 60. The prologue of the *Eumenides* is also discussed in a number of sections: see further 5.3.2 ('Prayers and oaths'), 6.4.3 ('Suspense through action delayed'), 0 ('Surprise at the beginning',), and 7.4.3 ('Surprise through shock').

[43] Sommerstein (1989) on 214.

consummation which is invoked by Apollo to support his case for Orestes: 'the pledges given Hera (Ἥρας **τελείας**) and Zeus | **for a marriage's fulfilment**' (214).[44] The meaning of τέλος as marriage reoccurs towards the end of the play. Although the Furies object to Apollo by favouring blood relations over marital relations, Athena subsequently declares that the Furies' prerogative should be honoured with sacrifices to ensure the successful fulfilment of each marriage (γαμηλίου τέλους, 835). Having the ex-Furies, the Awesome Ones, secure the marital ceremony and relationship signifies the conditional dynamics of the *telos*-related words after the death of Clytemnestra.

2.2.3. Τέλος as 'payment'

The meaning of *telos* as payment is considered by Seaford as a completion of an obligation, ranging from financial to retributive.[45] In the *Agamemnon*, the cognate of *telos*, the hapax compound τελεσσίφρων, has qualified Wrath as 'purposeful': the purposeful Wrath (Μῆνις) reached Troy, because Zeus Xenios was dishonoured by Paris who dishonoured his host Menelaus (700–6). The accompanying verbal form 'drove on its way' (ἤλασεν, 702), meanwhile, reveals its oracular character: the power of Wrath, having been activated at Aulis (*Agamemnon* 155), is now re-introduced and facilitates the flow of events. The significance of this passage extends beyond the limits of the ode, as Knox has pointed out, and the lion cub parable can equally be applied to Helen, Aegisthus, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Orestes.[46] Whichever character one might relate it to, what needs to be emphasised is that, in this fable, the will of gods, expressed by the personified powers of Ruin (Ἄτη, 735) and Fury (Ἐρινύς, 749), sets in motion all interpretations of προτέλεια at once.[47]

In the *Libation Bearers*, the meaning of *telos* as 'payment' can also be found in the use of the verb τελοῦμαι as used by the Chorus and Orestes in the kommos (309–10, 385).[48] In line 310 the women of the Chorus refer to the idea of retaliatory justice: '[i]n return for hostile words, **let** hostile words **be paid** (**τελείσθω**)!'. The same is reiterated in line 313 through the

[44] Lebeck (1971) 69–70; Goldhill (1984b) 170.

[45] Seaford (2012) 127.

[46] Knox (1952). See also Lebeck (1971) 50–51. Cf. Nappa (1995) who suggests that Paris is the one implied.

[47] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 717–49; Collard (2002) on 717–49.

[48] For more on the kommos of the *Libation Bearers*, see Garvie (1986) 122–25.

principle δράσαντι παθεῖν: 'For the doer, suffering'.[49] According to this, a destructive future will always await the perpetrator. Later on, in 382–85 Orestes further builds on this idea by invoking Zeus: 'Zeus, Zeus!... | likewise for the parents **shall it be paid** (**τελεῖται**)'.[50] As in Clytemnestra's invocation in the *Agamemnon* prior to her husband's murder when Zeus had been presented as 'fulfiller' (972–73), the use of τελεῖται here manifests the confidence with which the speaker considers his future acts as certain and, therefore, complete.

2.2.4. Τέλος as 'authority'

Seaford's final semantic category is associated with the power which leads to completion as 'authority', 'task,' or duty'. The word τέλος appears twice in the 'Carpet scene' of the *Agamemnon* (783–974) with this meaning, once uttered by Clytemnestra and once by Agamemnon (908, 934). Clytemnestra uses τέλος as 'duty', referring to the servants' spreading of fabrics for Agamemnon's path to the palace (908–13), ostensibly to honour her husband and celebrate his return.[51] For the spectator and the reader, however, who have been aware of Clytemnestra's plan, τέλος also implies 'purpose' and 'fulfilment': the path 'strewn with purples' (910) will precipitate Agamemnon's entrance to the house and, subsequently, the materialisation of a future. This future has been designed by Clytemnestra to be immediate ('immediately' 910) and unexpected ('into a home unexpected', 911). The repetition of τέλος as 'duty' by Agamemnon (934) shows that, despite his initial reservations, he will proceed to walk on the fabrics as Clytemnestra instructs. Again, τέλος means more than 'duty'. Agamemnon gives into his wife's orders which he asks to be executed 'quickly' (945). The 'Carpet scene' ends with the necessary preparations for the successful completion of Clytemnestra's plan: here, *telos* acquires also the meaning of 'ritual performance', through which Clytemnestra's purpose will be fulfilled. As Vernant comments, 'the moment Agamemnon sets foot on the carpet, the drama reaches its consummation'.[52]

[49] Garvie (1986) on 306–14.

[50] See n. 50.

[51] Similarly, in the *Libation Bearers* Cilissa speaks about her 'duty' (τέλος, 760) as both 'a launderer and a nurse'.

[52] Vernant (1988) 47.

Telos with the meanings of 'task' and 'duty' as seen above (908) is also used by Cassandra to refer to her prophetic skill when speaking to the elderly men of the Chorus (1202). The prophetess reveals that this has been assigned to her by Apollo. According to the mythical tradition, Apollo taught Cassandra the skill of prophesy in exchange for sexual favours, which she finally refused, and the god punished her by making her prophecies unpersuasive.[53] In this context, she employs τέλος as a form of communication and exchange between humans and the divine.[54] During her violent visitations to the future, Cassandra also experiences her τέλος as the purpose and fulfilment of this duty as a prophetess, and, most importantly, she experiences her τέλος as an end, because she foreshadows Agamemnon's and her own death (see the concept of *future present* in Chapter 4). The final *telos*-word of the scene reflects her inability to persuade the elderly men about the truth of her prophecies: they use τοῦ τελοῦντος (1253), the masculine participle of τελῶ, meaning 'the (male) accomplisher', whereas Cassandra has already revealed the *female* identity of the perpetrator.

In the *Libation Bearers*, the third instance of τελεσφόρος with the meaning of authority appears in the final scene before the matricide. Orestes and Pylades, disguised as travellers bringing the news for the supposed death of Orestes to the masters of the house of the Atreides, ask for somebody who is τελεσφόρος to greet and welcome them: 'Have someone **with authority** (**τελεσφόρος**) in the house come out, | the lady in charge— but a man is more seemly' (663–64). Here the adjective τελεσφόρος can be interpreted in different ways. Orestes' request for the arrival of someone who is τελεσφόρος in the sense of having authority responds to how the doorkeeper must understand the adjective. For Orestes, Pylades, the Chorus, as well as for reading and watching audiences, τελεσφόρος does not only signify the person in charge, but also represents the fulfilment of Orestes' desire,[55] echoing the previous occurrences (212, 541), to mean 'to fulfil his prayers'.[56] In both cases, this person would be either Clytemnestra or Aegisthus.[57]

[53] On the mythical account of the story of Apollo and Cassandra, see Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 1202–13; Gantz (1993) 92–93.

[54] Goldhill (1984b) 179 n. 7; Fischer (1965) 24.

[55] Goldhill (1984a) 170.

[56] Garvie (1986) in 663.

[57] On Clytemnestra's surprising appearance at the door instead of Aegisthus, see section under 7.3.3 'Surprise through unexpected appearances'.

2.3. Τέλος: from Semantics to Hermeneutics

In what follows, the *telos*-vocabulary must be understood in ways that transcend the neat categorical distinctions followed so far. Through synthesis or antithesis, the four semantic categories discussed above can be shown to complement, contradict, or compete with one another.

Moving away from the associations of προτέλεια with the event of a wedding in the *Agamemnon*, an added semantic layer relates it to the upcoming murders of the first two plays of the tetralogy. In this case, the *telos* for which προτέλεια prepares the ground might be Agamemnon's murder. As Lebeck puts it: 'The deaths at Troy are προτέλεια, preliminary sacrifices, which rouse dread about the fate of Agamemnon'.[58] Although Froma Zeitlin's study argues for the employment of the word προτέλεια only as sacrificial language, without relating it to possible allusions to the broader storyline, it does nevertheless acknowledge its 'unpropitious use'.[59] However, within two lines from 65 these notions of the προτέλεια and its causal relation to future events are now undermined by another cognate of *telos*, the verbal form τελεῖται, employed by the Chorus: 'they [things] **will be fulfilled** (**τελεῖται**) in what is fated' (68). This statement is marked by a sense of certainty for what the future will bring, which originates from the associations of τελεῖται with the fulfilling power of the gods and, more specifically, of Zeus, whose anger against the Trojans has led to their defeat (60–67). This, according to Collard, is 'the first occurrence of this motif dominating' the *Oresteia*,[60] as the hymn to Zeus (160–83) also illustrates. The upcoming murders *will be definitely fulfilled* as τέλη, even if προτέλεια is not successful as a ritual.[61] The interpretations of προτέλεια above convey an ironic tone: any celebratory connotations have been substituted by the destructive power of death.[62] This power, which was firstly manifested in Troy, will continue to drive the narrative forward. Similarly, the word τελευτή, a cognate of τέλος, signals the 'bitter

[58] Lebeck (1971) quote from 10, see also 60–63.

[59] Zeitlin (1965) 465.

[60] Collard (2002) on 68. For more on the motif of divine order in the *Oresteia*, see Goward (2005) 69–80; Collard (2002) xxx–xl.

[61] Seaford (2012) 190.

[62] In Chapter 6, I analyse how irony is employed in the narrative of the *Oresteia* to generate suspense (6.4.2 'Suspense through irony').

fulfilment' of the marriage between Helen and Paris (γάμου πικρᾶς τελευτάς, 745).[63] As Collard puts it, this is 'a sardonic play upon the near-formula 'fulfil the rite of marriage''.[64]

In the Carpet scene, Clytemnestra interprets her τέλος as 'duty' and 'task', whereas the external readers and audience interpret it as 'purpose' and 'fulfilment'. In the case of Agamemnon, his use of *telos* is understood by Clytemnestra as well as by viewers and readers as associated with his death. As for Cassandra, her understanding of τέλος is transparent to readers and spectators but inaccessible to the Chorus. Cassandra and Clytemnestra are the only two characters who master the wide range of meanings and interpretations of *telos*. However, their experiences of τέλος are diametrically opposite. Cassandra's use of *telos* will prove destructive for herself and Agamemnon, signifying victory for Clytemnestra. In the case of Clytemnestra, on the other hand, the adjective τέλειος activates both the senses of authority and ritual. Following Agamemnon's announcement of his intention to walk on the fabric towards the palace, Clytemnestra delivers a seventeen-line-soliloquy which concludes with a striking fourfold repetition of τελ-:

> …ἀνδρὸς **τελείου** δῶμ' ἐπιστρωφωμένου. | Ζεῦ Ζεῦ **τέλειε**, τὰς ἐμὰς εὐχὰς **τέλει**· | μέλοι δέ τοί σοι τῶνπερ ἂν μέλλῃς **τελεῖν**.
>
> …when the man its **master** moves about it [the house]. | Zeus, Zeus **master-fulfiller**, **give** my prayers **fulfilment**! And | may you indeed take care of whatever you mean **to fulfil**!

At line 972 the phrase τέλειος ἀνήρ refers to Agamemnon, signifying that he is the master of the house, a status which, however, the speaker is sabotaging in the most definite way. In this context, Agamemnon must be seen as activating the meaning of τέλειος as 'the one who fulfils', in a sense that the object of fulfilment, the *telos*, is the murder plan upon his return, through which he is becoming τέλειος. Additionally, the state of Agamemnon as τέλειος introduces the corrupted sacrifice motif.[65] Although Edward Fraenkel argues for a reductive

[63] This leads to Paris' indictment by the city of Troy as 'fatal in marriage' (713).

[64] Collard (2002) on 744.

[65] See also n. 19.

meaning of τέλειος and notes that 'it is clearly chosen for the sake of the echo in Ζεῦ τέλειε',[66] Raeburn and Thomas acknowledge that '[g]iven 972 τελείου and its sacrificial nuance, the wordplay might suggest the extra point that Agamemnon is a suitable victim for Zeus τέλειος to lead to his end'.[67] The moment when Agamemnon crosses the threshold of the palace, Clytemnestra emphatically prays for the optimal actualisation of her ultimate goal, Agamemnon's murder. The invocation to Zeus with the cult name τέλειος as the 'master-fulfiller' (973) activates the multi-layered meaning of τέλειος used for Agamemnon above.[68] Goldhill points out that '[f]or Clytemnestra, this murder is also a consummation devoutly desired, as it is the end point of a narrative foretold'.[69] However, lines 973–74, containing as they do three *telos* words, build up to a climactic finale while also dramatising a desire for the events to come.

As mentioned in the previous section, all references to τελεσφόρος we have seen above have a sense of 'payment',[70] and, as such, draw attention to the idea of revenge. Clytemnestra as τελεσφόρος will repay the murder with her own death as an act of retaliation and within the teleological pattern of 'the doer who suffers'.[71] In this sense the word τελεσφόρος expands from the meaning of 'the one who *brings* fulfilment', as seen in the *Agamemnon*, to 'the one who *bears* fulfilment' as in the *Libation Bearers*. In the first play, Clytemnestra is τελεσφόρος in the sense that she operates as the agent who has been planning Agamemnon's murder. *Her* τέλος has associations of duty, purpose, and fulfilment, whereas *his* τέλος has associations of death. In the second play, Clytemnestra is the victim of Orestes' τέλος as duty, purpose, and fulfilment. He is taking over the role of τελεσφόρος, while she is taking over the role of Agamemnon and the meaning of τέλος as end. As Taplin observes, there is a mirroring pattern between the scene in the *Agamemnon* where Clytemnestra welcomes her husband (855–913) and the scene in the *Libation Bearers* where she welcomes

[66] Fraenkel (1950, II) in 972.

[67] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 972. Stanford notes that 'there is a kind of pun on the ἀνδρός τελείου' (1939, 157).

[68] Lebeck (1983) 82–83. On Zeus as Fulfiller, see also in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* 526 and in *Seven against Thebes* 167. Fischer (1965, 127–36) provides a detailed analysis of this subject. On religious language in Aeschylus, see Citti (1962).

[69] See Goldhill (2015) 237.

[70] Seaford (2012) 126–27; Goldhill (1984b) 170–71.

[71] Goldhill (1984b) 170. Lebeck (1983) argues that the imagery of the *Oresteia* illustrates this principle through three rituals: the sacrifice, the hunt, and the marriage.

Orestes and Pylades (668–73): while in the former she deceives her husband, in the latter she is being deceived by her son.[72]

Although all *telos*-related words in the *Libation Bearers* so far have been related to purpose and fulfilment, the event of the matricide brings these to an end. In the kommos the Chorus recognise the need for an end to the misfortunes: 'You great powers of Fate, may Zeus | **grant an ending** here (**τελευτᾶν**) | in which Justice changes to the other side!' (306–8). This ending is supposed to be granted through the upcoming matricide. Just before the matricide, the women of the Chorus chant the song of victory employing towards the end of their song the phrase **παντελὴς** χρόνος '**all-fulfilling** Time' (965).[73] This phrase manifests the climactic restoration of order to the house of the Atreides which will be inflicted by the imminent murder of Clytemnestra (third stasimon, 935–71). However, after the matricide (the event which was supposed to grant an ending to the vicious cycle of violence) and Orestes' appearance on the stage over the bodies of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra (exodos 973–1062), Orestes and the Chorus find themselves still in agony over how the situation will end. Although the murder of Clytemnestra has been committed, it has not produced the desired outcome. Orestes in despair admits: 'I have no knowledge how **it will end** (**τελεῖ**)' (1021). Although the women of the Chorus initially respond with the idea that the fulfilment of the matricide *will* operate as 'the third family-storm | in turn to have blown itself out and **come to fulfilment** (**ἐτελέσθη**, 1066–67)', in the very last couplet of the play they come to the realisation that Orestes' fears are valid: 'So where will it end (κρανεῖ), where will the power of Ruin | sink into sleep and cease (καταλήξει)?'[74] (1075–76). In this last scene of the *Libation Bearers*, the employment of the broader vocabulary of *telos* illustrates that the state of fulfilment has been substituted by the deferral of fulfilment, not reaching the end but persisting as a dynamic course of action which requires constant input.[75]

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[72] Taplin (1978) 92, (1977) 342–43.

[73] Here I cite Garvie's translation (1986). Although Sommerstein (2008) and Collard (2002) follow West who follows Lafontaine in emending πρόμος as 'prince' (1990, 260), I follow Page (1972). In favour of χρόνος: Garvie (1986) in 965; Goldhill (1984a) 197; Waanders (1983) 180; Lloyd-Jones (1990) 177; Widzisz (2012) 480–86. For the adjective παντελὴς, see also its use with the noun σαγὴν (560) meaning 'complete with baggage' (Collard's translation). For the use of the adjective παντελής in Greek tragedy, see Waanders (1983) 179–80. Another adjective, cognate of τέλος, is found in the *Agamemnon*: ὑπερτελὴς (286), meaning 'rising high in its strength' for the absolute light that brought the news of the sack of Troy. Both adjectives signify the transcendence of the meaning of *telos*.

[74] Sommerstein's translation (2008).

[75] Waanders (1983) 155.

Although Roberts has attributed a triple role to Orestes, as the fulfiller of the portent, as the interpreter of the portents, and as a portent himself,[76] I argue that these need to be seen through the word τέλος and how it signifies the deferral of fulfilment in general. It is not only that Orestes fulfils, interprets, and incorporates the portent. Although the enactment of these roles leads to the fulfilment of the matricide, it also signifies the murderous act which will also take the *Libation Bearers* to the end, it will make Orestes unable to pursue his future in the *Eumenides*, and it will give a vague sense of purposeful fulfilment after Orestes' acquittal.

In the *Eumenides* the use of τέλος particularly associated with the Furies subverts the ideas of completion, finality, and finitude. In their binding song (307–96), the Furies employ several τελ- cognates as manifestations of their power of fulfilment. They present themselves as the ones 'with final authority'[77] (τελέως, 320) to put an end to the bloodshed and as the ones who will bring everything 'to fulfilment' as τέλειοι (382), because they hold 'a power bestowed by the god **to the full** (**τέλεον**)' (393). However, as Sommerstein aptly notes, 'the justice they offer can never be final'.[78] Responding to Athena's announcement of the new legal system, the Furies defend their thesis that '**an end** (**τέλος**) is appointed and waits' (544), with τέλος to imply their retribution that will certainly come. The endurance of the Furies' power is also promised by Athena who responds to their request for pledges as the newly established Awesome Goddesses with the verb τελῶ, from τέλος as fulfilment:[79] 'for I may **not** say anything which **I shall not fulfil**' (ἔξεστι γάρ μοι **μὴ** λέγειν ἃ **μὴ τελῶ**, 899). Athena communicates her intention emphatically with the double negative μή ('not') and the future indicative τελῶ (rather than present subjunctive), meaning 'intend to fulfil'.[80] But what she really means becomes clear only towards the end of the play where she uses the adverb τελέως (953) in ways that both echo and reverse its earlier use in 319–20 by the Furies discussed above. Here in 953 the adverb is used to highlight the present and future power of these goddesses, not as the Furies but as the Awesome Goddesses: 'they work their will **to fulfilment** (**τελέως**)'. Just 130 lines before the end of the play the Furies finally agree to take

[76] Roberts (1985) 289–91 and n. 15–16.

[77] Sommerstein's translation (2008).

[78] Sommerstein (1989) on 318–20.

[79] Seaford (2012) 195 and n. 15.

[80] Sommerstein (1989) on 899.

over a new sphere of influence, the human affairs (δέξομαι, 'I shall accept' 916). Due to the significance and the open-endedness of this position, its fulfilment is indefinitely postponed.

2.4. Conclusion

This Chapter has moved from the lexical analysis of specific semantic categories of *telos* in the the *Oresteia* (or at least in its tragic plays as there is no relevant lexical evidence for *Proteus*) to the undermining of such a categorisation. The lexical occurrences of *telos* in the tragic plays of the tetralogy push readers and spectators into two different directions: towards *telos* as an act of fulfilment purposefully planned (2.2) and towards *telos* as a possibility open to fulfilment and/or non-fulfilment (2.3).

While *telos* as purpose and *telos* as fulfilment complement each other in the *Agamemnon* and in most of the *Libation Bearers*, their relation appears either unstable or fractured after the completion of the matricide and until the end of the *Eumenides*. More specifically, in the first play, the treatment of *telos* by Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, Cassandra, and the Chorus demonstrates a difference in meaning and interpretation between what the characters intend and how this is understood internally by other characters or externally by readers and spectators. In the *Libation Bearers*, the most powerful *telos* word, τελεσφόρος, fails to fulfil the expectations of its implications, as the completion of the matricide no longer signifies a desirable culmination of the future. The *Eumenides* maintains and develops this subversion of the meaning of τέλος that we see in the final scene of the *Libation Bearers*. The sense of *telos* as fulfilment and end is being substituted by an idea of *telos* as an on-going movement towards an unforeseeable future and its infinite possibilities.

The abundance and range of the τέλος-words in Aeschylus' three tragedies make us think about the meanings of *telos* in numerous ways, both in context and out of context. As a result, the linguistic analysis undertaken in this Chapter foregrounds the strong link that exists between *telos* and the future, and prepares the ground for the concepts to be examined in Chapters 3–7: *narrative closure*, *future present* and *present future*, *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*, *suspense*, and *surprise*.

More specifically, the oscillation of the semantic implications of *telos* from purposeful fulfilment, completion, ritual, payment, and authority on the one hand to non-fulfilment, ending, and crisis on the other hand calls for a more narratologically oriented analysis in Chapter 3. The meaning of *telos* does not only imply ending, but also points towards the end of the narrative, which can also deviate from the meaning of *telos* as end. Although this aspect of *telos* may seem incompatible with a study of the future, it is actually central to it as it raises plot-related issues regarding the future and where to look for it, whether inside the boundaries of the narrative or beyond them, inside the world of the text or outside, in the world of its receivers. The linguistic analysis of τέλος above also paves the way for the conceptual approach of *telos* in Chapter 4. There the meanings of transition, deferral, and perpetual crisis, having been activated through *telos*, will be further explored as the aftermath of the interaction between the present and the future not in synergy, but in discordance, through *future present* and *present future*. Similarly, the understanding of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* in Chapter 5 presupposes the reconsideration of *telos* and its unexpected implications as well. The meanings of the indefinite, infinite possibilities of the future, the postponement and frustration of completion emerging from the employment of *telos* in the *Oresteia* are all instrumental for the discussion of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* and the open and closed future. Finally, the examination of *suspense* and *surprise* (Chapters 6 and 7) also draws on how the teleological implications of the *Oresteia* shape our understanding and experience of the future, arguing for the immersive power of the narrative.

3

Telos as ending

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I move to *telos* as narrative goal and closure in order to further explore the broad *teleological* implications of the future in the *Oresteia*. The previous chapter followed closely the meanings of the Greek word τέλος with a view to constructing a lexical map of the τέλος words of the tetralogy. The scope of this Chapter is more specific in that it explores the narrative connotation of *telos* as closure, an approach which pushes the lexical analysis of τέλος more firmly in the direction of a teleological reading of the *Oresteia*. Combining my analysis in Chapter 2 with the one offered in this chapter, I argue that calling attention to the future in Aeschylus also means calling attention to understanding the notions of *telos*: not only in terms of purposes and their fulfilment which lie in the future (Chapter 2), but also in terms of closure as anticipated in the future of the plot which we witness as readers/spectators.

Although the narratological concepts of *closure* and *end* have been discussed in classical scholarship in relation to Greek tragedy, their association with Aeschylus' tragic narrative remains under-explored.[1] With the notable exception of A. F. Garvie, to whom I return below, the issue of indeterminacy has been applied to the endings of Sophocles and

[1] For studies on closure and Greek tragedy (including bibliography) see in particular, Goldhill (2015) on Sophocles; Garvie (2014) on Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; Hopman (2013) on Aeschylus; Roberts (2005) on Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, (1988) on Sophocles, (1987) on Sophocles and Euripides; Segal (2001, 108–22) on Sophocles, (1996) on Sophocles and Euripides; Dunn (1996) and Fowler (1989) on Euripides; Taplin (1983) on Sophocles. On closure in Greek and Latin literature in general, see West (2007); Roberts, Dunn & Fowler (1997), Fowler (1989).

Euripides much more systematically than to Aeschylus.[2] In brief, the scholars' tendency to treat Aeschylean endings as uncomplicated has impeded the relevant research so far. Francis Dunn has shown that the endings of Euripides try 'to let a single enactment indicate the infinite continuity of experience'.[3] The following analysis argues that such a statement can also be applied to Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Although the existing discussion on closure in the *Oresteia* (to which I will also return below) is mostly preoccupied with the question of whether the *Eumenides* meets the requirements for a complete closure, the exploration of *telos* undertaken here considers the *Eumenides* within a tetralogic structure that takes into account the endings of three other plays (including the satyr drama *Proteus*). The open ending of the *Eumenides* which is advocated in this chapter is often associated with changes to the text introduced by modern artistic adaptations such as those by Pier Paolo Pasolini, Athol Fugard, Ariane Mnouchkine, Peter Stein.[4] My argument is that such a reading is fully compatible with the play itself rather than being the result of modern rewritings of it. Before I embark on an analysis of the plays themselves, I offer a theoretical prelude where I approach *narrative closure* as 'a reception phenomenon'[5] which operates through the *refiguration* of the narrative by the plays themselves as well as by readers and spectators.

3.2. Theoretical prelude: τέλος and narrative closure

The importance of the narrative ending as a meaningful part of the plot was acknowledged at least as early by Aristotle in the *Poetics*.[6] Aristotle uses the word λύσις for the *denouement* of a tragic play.[7] More specifically, λύσις is defined as 'the **denouement** (λύσιν) extending from

[2] Garvie (2014, 31–32 and n. 48, 53) argues against the old assumption that 'Greek tragedy always did aim at complete closure', citing Cameron (1971) and Hester (1984).

[3] Dunn (1996) 78.

[4] See for instance, Nooter (2016); Bierl (1997).

[5] Klauk, Koppe & Wescott (2016) 26.

[6] Nünlist (2014, 157) notes that '[t]he fundamental questions of 'where to begin' and 'where to end' must be as old as literature itself in his discussion of how ancient critics have approached the issues of beginnings and endings in the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. On ancient literary criticism on closure before Aristotle, see Halliwell (1998) 6–27; Lucas (1968) xiv–xxii; after Aristotle, see Fowler (1989) 104–8.

[7] Carroll (2007, 3–4) acknowledges Aristotle as the first philosopher to be concerned with closure on the grounds of the definition of tragedy as a 'complete' action (τελείας, 1449b24) and not on his reflections on λύσις as 'denouement'.

the beginning of the transformation **till the end** (μέχρι τέλους)'[8] and 'should issue from the plot as such'.[9] In the following centuries, other terms with similar content were used to conceptualise narrative ending such as *solutio* and *dénouement* which were coined by Latin theoreticians and dramaturgists of French classicism respectively.[10] Since the late 1960s, the concept of narrative ending has become the centre of in-depth discussions by literary critics, as well as narrative and drama theorists.[11] The term c*losure* is first introduced by Barbara Smith in 1968.[12] Smith defines *poetic closure* as 'the sense of stable conclusiveness, finality, or 'clinch' which we experience', while narrative is not at the centre of her arguments.[13] One of the most influential studies in the modern scholarship of literary theory is Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending* which was also published in 1967. Kermode offers an apocalyptic reading of fiction in which the sense of ending is rooted in the human nature that aspires to provide life with shape, structure, and explanation, while being under the shadow of the end.[14] Following this logic, the readers (and, for the purposes of our discussion, spectators) live *in medias res*, experiencing endings as always *immanent* and not *imminent*.[15]

What the following scholarly works have in common is that they privilege the ending of the narrative as a key element for broader issues of its interpretation. Aristotle's idea of the denouement (λύσις), alongside with his idea of the completeness (τελεία, e.g., 1449b24) has led to modern explorations of closure which are very useful for my study. Drawing on Aristotle, Paul Ricoeur argues that 'unknotting' (as λύσις) and 'end' do not correspond to the same idea of closure. He argues that, while incidents can be interminable, as real life, and, thus, open to their refiguration, narrative as *muthos* needs to be terminable, and, thus, closed to its configuration.[16] Another account on closure comes from H. Porter Abbott who draws on

[8] In contrast to δέσις (1455b25–28): 'I define the complication (δέσιν) as extending from the beginning to the furthest point before the transformation to prosperity or adversity.'

[9] Aristotle goes on (1454a38–1454b2): '…and not from a deus ex machina as in *Medea* and the scene of departure in the *Iliad*.' Elsewhere: '[m]any poets handle the complication well, the denouement badly (λύουσι κακῶς, 1456a9–10).'

[10] Pfister (1988) 95 and n. 72 with bibliography.

[11] For bibliography on closure, see Klauk, Köppe & Onea (2016) 2 n. 1; Pfister (1988) 302 n. 72. See also n. 1 above.

[12] Fowler (1989, 76–77) argues for Smith's (and less Kermode's) significant impact on classical literary criticism.

[13] Smith (1968) 2. On Smith's view on anticlosure, see Ricoeur's brief comment (1985, II) 165.

[14] Kermode (1967) 6.

[15] Kermode (1967) e.g. 25. See also Kermode (1978).

[16] Ricoeur (1985, II) 20, 165 n. 29. Δέσις is also rendered as 'unknotting'. Klauk, Köppe & Onea (2016, 2 n. 3) also raise the difference between the end of the plot and the end of the narrative.

Roland Barthes' ideas of 'proairetic code' and 'hermeneutic code' which operate as guides to closure: the first refers to *expectations fulfilled* and the second to *questions answered* by the end of the narrative.[17] Similar cognitive preoccupations with closure are also at the centre of Noël Carroll's work. For Carroll, *narrative closure* is closely associated with the matter of answered questions thanks to which the reader, the viewer, or the listener has a 'sense of finality'.[18] Although this might be reminiscent of Kermode's 'sense of an ending', Carroll states that, while Kermode is interested in 'speculation about the significance of narrative closure for human life', his own interest lies in the *structure* of narrative closure.[19] For Greek tragedy specifically, he adds that tragic closure is related to its inherent 'aura of necessity'.[20] In a similar cognitive context, Tobias Klauk et al. have put into experimentation several theoretical concepts of *narrative closure* and argue that its strongest correlates are the completeness of the work and the absence of unanswered questions.[21] Finally, in his study of classical plots, Nick Lowe also privileges closure as primary narrative value (alongside with unity and tight economy) and acknowledges several *levels*, and varying *degree* and *quality* to closure.[22] For all its value, this argument for a narrative universe 'strongly closed' and the idea that the reader must see the narrative 'as a perfectly programmed machine' is at odds with my preoccupations with Ricoeur's mimesis 3.[23] I argue that, while any teleological drive of the plot looks forward to its ending,[24] that ending does not always represent a *telos* in the sense of goal, fulfilment, and end.

The link between *telos* and narrative closure is rooted in the meaning of the Greek word τέλος as end and has generated several discussions on the grounds of the temporal relation between closure and end. A twofold question arises: does the *narrative closure* happen

[17] Barthes (1977) cited by Abbott (2008) 57–58 (further readings on closure 65–66). The matter of expectations and questions as associated with *suspense* and *surprise* will be explored in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

[18] Carroll (2007) 2–3.

[19] Carroll (2007, 1) n. 1, author's emphasis.

[20] Carroll (2006) 4.

[21] Klauk, Köppe & Weskott (2016a) 27–28. See also Klauk, Köppe & Onea (2016, 4 n. 12) on a brief summary of how several narrative theorists define closure. The difficulties to involve the emotional aspect of narrative closure in the discussion in a similar way with the cognitive are also explained.

[22] Lowe (2000) 27, author's emphasis.

[23] Lowe (2000) quotes from 33, 62, and 78. Lowe also notes (2000, 264) that the meaning of closure as the reader's 'sense of an ending' lies outside the scope of his study.

[24] E.g. Chatman (2009) 32: 'It [narrative] directs us from one moment to the next. The direction is usually forward, from an initial state of affairs to a final one.'

at the end of the narrative, bringing a desirable ending to it, and is the ending of the narrative accompanied by *narrative closure*? First, the ending of the narrative cannot always educe closure, and closure is not educed *only* at the ending of the narrative.[25] The concept of closure needs to be explored not only as a phenomenon occurring at the end of the narrative, but also as a condition that lies within the narrative.[26] Second, the usual associations between teleology[27] and narrative, often manifested through phrases such as 'narrative teleology', 'teleology of narrative' and 'teleological narrative',[28] downplay the openness of narrative as a quality of narrativity. Philip Ajouri defines as strong narrative teleology the situation when the reader 'is made to believe that the protagonist(s) or the whole narrated world has a goal or serves a function that depends on some higher power'.[29] In his study of the problems of closure in nineteenth-century novel D. A. Miller argues that, although narratives always directs us towards their end, 'they are not always governed by it'.[30] Another view on closure as not exclusively being dominated by a teleologically determined linearity towards *telos* has been expressed by Franco Moretti. As opposed to the tendency of a 'teleological rhetoric' which Moretti classifies as the model of classification, he also presents the model of transformation, according to which 'what makes a story meaningful is its narrativity, its being an open-ended process.'[31] In the recent series *Narrating Futures*, Felicitas Meifert-Menhardt notes that even texts which do not perform 'the selection between multiple options for continuation', namely 'future narratives', can also offer ways to explore future possibilities and resist formal closure.[32]

[25] See Klauk, Köppe & Weskott (2016) 26; Klauk, Köppe & Onea (2016) 1; Abbott (2008) 56, 62; Segal (2007).

[26] Carroll (2007) 10–13; Lowe (2000).

[27] In Buchanan (2010) s. v. *teleology*: 'the study of, and the implicit assumption that everything has, a final purpose'. Derrida defines teleology as 'a negation of the future', cited by Kennedy (2013, 61). In religious terms, teleology as eschatology is equated with God's design including the Final Judgement and is compared to fatalism.

[28] Ajouri (2015) 49–51; Currie (2013) 48. See Grethlein (2013a, 1–26) who suggests a balanced approach between teleology and experience in the field of the historiography.

[29] Ajouri (2015) quote from 50–51. The author touches upon several strategies which enhance and weaken the narrative teleology.

[30] Miller (1981) xiv. See also xi n. 2 on his use of the term 'closure' and on a criticism to Smith (1968). In a sketching of the two trends about closure, Segal (2007) presents Miller as a representative disputant of strong closure.

[31] Moretti (1987) 7.

[32] Meifert-Menhardt (2013) 37 (and n. 36), 102. In the same context, Morson's term *sideshadowing* (1994) illustrates the anti-teleological tendency of some narratives. See Chapter 5 on *Sideshadowing* in the *Oresteia* (section 5.4).

Apart from the term λύσις as 'denouement', Aristotle also uses τέλος to discuss two concepts around which many of the issues above revolve: narrative ending and narrative goal. To be sure, Aristotle speaks about the 'exit scene' in spatial rather than temporal terms through the word ἔξοδος: 'the exodos is the whole portion of a tragedy following the final choral song' (1452b21–22).[33] However, the narrative ending is expressed in temporal terms by τέλος and two cognates, the adjective τελεία and the noun τελευτή. The adjective is present at the definition of tragedy, according to which tragedy is an imitation of an action which is **complete** (**τελείας**, 1449b24, also in 1452a2). Both τελεία and τελευτὴ occur later in a recapitulation of that definition (1450b23–26): 'We have stipulated that tragedy is mimesis of an action that is **complete** (**τελείας**), whole, and of magnitude', arguing that a whole is that 'which has a beginning, middle, and **end** (**τελευτήν**)'.[34] Aristotle continues by defining τελευτή as something 'which itself naturally occurs, whether necessarily or usually, after a preceding event, but need not be followed by anything else' (1450b28–30).[35] This definition allows for an understanding of τελευτή not only as textual termination point, but as something with duration, that is 'ending' rather than 'end'. This is also reflected in how Liveley defines *lusis*: 'Aristotle's term to describe the 'loosening' of a plot towards its denouement.'[36] It is in this sense that the *ending* of a play (as opposed to its *end*) provides a resolution and should not be followed by anything else.[37] It is also in this sense that the verbal form τελευτᾶν is used to pinpoint that the plots should not **end** at an arbitrary point; τελευτή is a part of the plot which requires duration through which the poet should employ their skillfulness (1450b33–36). The statement of 1450b23–26 is repeated for epic poetry, this time with τέλος as synonym of τελευτή to mean again part of the plot rather than point: 'it is clear that plots, as in tragedy, should be constructed dramatically, that is, around a single, whole, and **complete** (**τελείαν**) action, with beginning, middle, and **end** (**τέλος**)' (1459a16–19). As

[33] Kremer (1971, 117) suggests the replacement of 'exodos' with 'final act'.

[34] See Plato's *Parmenides* (145A, B) for the same idea and terminology: 'Then the one, it appears, will have a beginning (ἀρχὴν), a middle (μέσον), and an **end** (**τελευτὴν**).'

[35] Elsewhere the words τελευτῶσιν, τελευτῶσα, and τελευτῆς mean 'end' (1453a26, 32–33, 38).

[36] Liveley (2019) 255, in Glossary.

[37] For an analysis of Aristotle's expression τὰ ἔξω τοῦ δράματος ('events outside the drama', 1454b2–3), see Roberts (1992).

seen so far, tragedy must be τελεία meaning that it is a whole which has an end,[38] and must also reach its narrative end with an appropriate ending, expressed by both τελευτή and τέλος.

Moving on to τέλος as narrative goal, this is distinct from τελευτή for the following reasons. As Aristotle argues, tragedy is structured for the sake of a goal (τέλος), which is 'a certain kind of action' (1450a18). The achievement of this goal depends on the prioritisation of the plot over character: 'Thus the events and the plot (μῦθος) are the **goal** (**τέλος**) of tragedy, and the **goal** (**τέλος**) is the most important thing of all' (1450a21–23).[39] Thus, being complete (τελεία), a tragedy can pursue its goal (τέλος) which is the emplotment of tragic narrative, the selection and order of events in a certain way. Grasping the plot is to understand both the unity and the purpose of the actions that are represented. Stephen Halliwell interprets the *telos* of tragedy (or *ergon*[40]) as a complex type of aesthetic pleasure which derives from the interaction of three parameters within the tragic narrative: pleasure, understanding, and emotion.[41] *Telos* develops into a core concept of Aristotle's literary criticism and as such it can be a useful frame for our discussion of the *narrative closure* in fifth-century drama.

Although Aristotle's theory of the dramatic plot is not normally credited with temporal preoccupations,[42] I hope the paragraphs above have shown that this view is reductive. If we combine what has been discussed here with Ricoeur's insights, we might say that the plot of the *Oresteia* is a synthesis of multiple events arranged in a *complete* and *whole* narrative (τελεία and ὅλη), with a beginning, a middle, and an end (τέλος). To follow this narrative means 'to move forward…under the guidance of an expectation that finds its fulfilment in the conclusion' of the narrative.[43] For this reason, it is useful to look at how the plots of the four plays (and I include here *Proteus* to the extent that one can comment on its plot) move towards their endings.

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[38] Hussain (2001): '*Teleias* is elaborated as *holes*'. Lucas (1968, in 1450b24) argues that 'whole' and 'complete' work as synonyms for an emphasis.

[39] See also 1450a38–39: 'Plot, then, is the first principle and, as it were, soul of tragedy, while character is secondary'. Other occurrences of τέλος as goal: 1459a26, 28, 1462b17–18, 1462b14. Husain (2001, 68) suggests the translation of τέλος as the technical term 'final cause', instead of colloquial translations such as purpose, goal or end.

[40] On τέλος and ἔργον, see Woodruff (2009); Halliwell (2002) 204–6 and n. 65.

[41] Halliwell (2002) 177–206, (1992). Heath (1996) argues in favour of a hedonist reading of tragedy, cf. Heath (2006) & (2014).

[42] See Introduction p. 5 and n. 17.

[43] Ricoeur (1984, I) 66.

In the *Agamemnon*, the movement of time is directed towards the killings of Agamemnon and Cassandra. As Bernard Knox points out, 'the whole play has been moving with the slow sureness of some natural force towards the moment of Agamemnon's death, and now, when that moment seems at hand, the rhythm of action is brusquely interrupted.'[44] In the *Libation Bearers*, the plot gravitates towards Clytemnestra's murder. However, in both plays this linear pattern takes place alongside with a second cyclical pattern, in the sense that one fulfilled goal must be followed by another through acts of killing and revenge. Manfred Pfister has noted that both patterns of dramatic temporal movement embrace a certain idea of progression and can work simultaneously, as 'it depends on the author's intention and the audience's perspective as to which of them is seen to predominate'.[45] As it will be argued below, the moment when the pre-set goals in both plays, the four murders (including Aegisthus' murder), are fulfilled, the sense of linearity is gradually substituted by a perception of time having no boundaries. As a result, the experience of tragic time at the end of the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*, when the characters (Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, and Orestes) must deal with the aftermath of their deeds, shifts from linear to achronic.[46] The achrony in the case of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus points to eutopia where future is an ally, while the achrony in the case of Orestes bears characteristics of an endless ordeal, a dystopia.

The sense of interchanging linear and cyclical movement in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* is substituted in the *Eumenides* and, maybe, *Proteus*, by the sense of condensing time through the features of *ellipsis* and *pause*. *Ellipsis* is 'a narrative jump ahead in story time',[47] with a subsequent gap in the flow of information.[48] Although *ellipsis* is a feature of narrative time common in later European drama, it is rare, if not unique, in fifth century BCE Greek tragedy.[49] In this third play, instead of repetitions of patterns and events which dominated in the previous two plays, changes of time and space occur during a short period of narrative

[44] Knox (1972) 111.

[45] Pfister (1988) 290. Shakespeare's plays and tragedies of French classicism are used as examples.

[46] On how narratives may point towards the aftermath, undermining the sense of closure, see Roberts (1997).

[47] Lowe (2000), quote from 164. It was first introduced by Genette (1980, 106–9) to describe narrative speed or narrative duration.

[48] Bal (1985) 78–79, 90–92, 97.

[49] Lowe (2000) 40–41, 164–65; Taplin (1978) 24.

time.[50] The end of the *Libation Bearers* finds Orestes fleeing from Argos pursued by the Furies. His plan to become a suppliant at Delphi (1034–39) is actualised in the first scene of the *Eumenides*, where Pythia speaks of her shock at the view of Orestes and the Furies (34–67). From his temple in Delphi Apollo orders another transfer for Orestes who this time departs for Athens (74–84), while the Furies leave shortly afterwards (in line 231) and after twelve lines show up in Athens as well. Apparently, what constitutes a commitment for all extant tragedies, the *unity of time*, is not at all a prerequisite for the *Eumenides*: it is the only extant tragedy which does not fit within 'a single revolution of the sun'.[51]

This sense of rushing towards the future is interrupted by long lyrical sections sung by the Furies which result in several pauses. In the first stasimon, the 'binding song' (307–96), the Furies outline how they will bind the community in perpetuity, while in the second stasimon they repeatedly spread fear through threats about a future where anarchy will prevail (490–565). In the closing scene (778–1047), immediately after Orestes' acquittal, the thematic repetition of their violent overthrow is also demonstrated by verbatim repetitions: lines 808–22 repeat 778–92 and lines 870–80 repeat 837–46.[52] After their agreement to take on the role of the Awesome Goddesses in the city of Athens (Σεμναί Θεαί, 1041), the following verbatim repetitions take place as celebratory exchanges among Athena, the new Eumenides and other members of the festive procession: the verb χαίρετε ('rejoice') in 996 [x2], 997, 1003, 1014[x2], the verb εὐφαμεῖτε ('keep holy silence') in 1035 and 1038, and the phrase ὀλολύξατέ νυν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς ('Cry out in joy now, in song') in 1043 and 1047. On one hand, the recurring themes of human catastrophe, and, on the other hand, the continual acclamations suspend the flow of time, causing an achrony due to the lack of temporal information.[53] The recursivity of the lyrical parts above breaks the sense of the passing of time and forces the narrative into a temporal *stasis*. To put it in Pfister's terms: 'the cyclical quality of certain repeated words,

[50] Another example of *ellipsis* is also observed at the beginning of the *Libation Bearers* (and not within the play, as in the *Eumenides*), when the plot starts some years after the end of the *Agamemnon*. On the discussion with regard to the interval between the two plays, see Brown (2018) 1–2 and n. 4.

[51] Περίοδος in Aristotle's *Poetics* (1449b12). On the unity of time, see Iakov (1982). The unity of space (which Aristotle does not comment) is also not applicable to the *Eumenides*. See Lowe (2000) 165 n. 13.

[52] For the significance of repetitions in poetic structure and closure, see Smith (1968) e.g., 38. For repetitions of a strophe, Smith (1968, 66) notes: 'The repetition of an entire stanza is not only a formal repetition but a thematic one as well: it is the reassertion of an utterance'.

[53] For this as a main characteristic of achrony, see Genette (1980, 84): 'dateless and ageless'. See also Bal (1985) 85–86.

actions and gestures underlines the impression of stasis'.[54] As we head towards the end of the play, the sense of a pause predominates, undermining the expectation of closure at the end of the *Eumenides*.

Proteus is *different* from the *Eumenides* in the sense that the return of Menelaus home, which, possibly, takes place only at the end of the play, does bring closure, as well as a sense of the concept of homecoming that we find in the *Agamemnon*. However, it is also *like* the *Eumenides* in the sense that it condenses time through *ellipsis*, *pause* or both. A series of unfortunate events such as the transformations of Proteus keeps delaying Menelaus' homecoming (see below), whereas changes of dramatic setting (at the very least from Egypt to Menelaus' home) create a sense of narrative jumps.[55]

3.3. Closure as necessity in the *Agamemnon*

The preoccupations of the *Agamemnon* with τέλος as end are mostly related to the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra by Clytemnestra and manifest a desire for closure.

Clytemnestra uses a cognate of τέλος, the adjective τελευταῖος, meaning 'the last' (314): she is the 'last' one to receive the beacon light sent by Agamemnon from Troy. She observes that both she and Agamemnon are equally victorious ('the first and last to run were winners'), which is, of course, valid, given that, in the competition of torch-races, every member of the team was responsible for the victory, but also overtly ironic.[56] The Chorus welcomes Agamemnon back with praises for the good 'end' to which he brought his case (τελέσασιν, 806). They also use the word τέρμα as synonym of τέλος to comment on the absolute power of the personified Justice (Δίκα, 773) who directs all things to their 'end' (τέρμα, 781). Agamemnon himself, before he enters the palace, defines a man as fortunate when he finishes his life with prosperity (βίον τελευτήσαντ', 929). After Clytemnestra's invocation to Zeus (973–74), the Chorus use the word τέρμα as 'end' for a second time (μάλα

[54] Pfister (1988) 291.

[55] As Menelaus narrates in the *Odyssey* (4. 349–586), the delay in Proteus' land lasted for twenty days of the total eight-year adventure away from home. If the narrative of *Proteus* follows closely the temporal framework of the *Odyssey*, these twenty days take over the whole narrative of *Proteus*.

[56] Sommerstein (2008) on 314; Collard (2002) on 314.

γέ τοι †τᾶς πολλᾶς ὑγιείας | ἀκόρεστον† **τέρμα**, 1001–3) for something that will definitely come, and for a third time to express their despair about the advent of this end: 'for the **ending** I am helpless' (**τέρμα** δ' ἀμηχανῶ, 1177). Finally, after Agamemnon's murder, the Chorus declare their wish not to reach the end they have been looking for during the whole play. They wish instead for an **unending** sleep (**ἀτέλευτον** ὕπνον, 1451) so as to endure the fortunes that fell over the house. They also refer to Agamemnon's death as Helen's 'final adornment' (τελέαν, 1458).[57] Another character who employs τέλος as 'end' in the tragic narrative with regard to Agamemnon's death is Cassandra. The prophetess uses τελεῖς (1107) and τέλος (1109) when she finally sees Clytemnestra's future actions through her experience of *future present* (see section 4.2. 'The *future present* in the *Agamemnon*'). Apart from Agamemnon, the word τέλος as end is also used by the Chorus in relation to Menelaus. Following the news delivered by the herald (624–25, 628–29, 632–33), they express their agony about how Menelaus' troubles will end (τελευτῆσαί, 635). Another cognate of τέλος, the word τελευτή, appears later on, again in association with Menelaus, as 'bitter **fulfilment**' for his marriage to Helen (πικρᾶς γάμου **τελευτάς**, 745), thus, foreshadowing some of the thematic preoccupations of *Proteus*.

Agamemnon's death may come across as the main event around which the plot is structured, but, in fact, it does not tie all the loose ends. Deborah Roberts and Barbara Smith argue that the event of a death which is situated at the end of the narrative is 'a natural marker of an ending' and a 'closural allusion' respectively.[58] However, in the *Agamemnon* Agamemnon's death does not coincide with the end of the play and does not secure closure: its occurrence around 320 lines before the end (1345 in total of 1673 lines) allows enough time for several narrative developments to take place and undermines the expectation of a neat ending. In these lines, the Chorus and Clytemnestra are in dispute over the justice of the murders, during which Clytemnestra's motives become even more obscure. While she acknowledges that this is the concluding act of the drama ('victory has come in fulfilment—late, but come it has', 1378), she is reminded of the inevitable public rage against Agamemnon's murderers (1411, 1413) and of the certainty of her punishment by Orestes who is not yet named but, undoubtedly, insinuated (1429–30, 1507–12, 1530–36, 1560–66).

[57] Sommerstein (2008) on 1458.

[58] Roberts (2005) 143, (1993) 573; Smith (1968) 172–82.

Another type of closural marker that is undermined in the closing scene of the *Agamemnon* is that of burial ritual which may signify the ending or a transition.[59] When the Chorus express their concern about Agamemnon's burial (1541–59), we learn that this will be conducted by his own murderers, without the participation of any other members of the household. As Roberts comments, this 'undercuts any closural effect that the reference of the burial might have.'[60] Roberts also names this type of closure 'reductive closure' which 'leaves in place or expresses the complexities that precede it.'[61] Thus, although the narrative raises the possibility of releasing some of the tension through the event of death and the ritual of burial, this is not accomplished in the final scene of the *Agamemnon*.[62]

Despite the pertinence of Roberts' argument for closural motifs, the discussion around the absence of a complete closure at the end of the *Agamemnon* needs to be addressed from a narratological perspective as well. Carroll points out that closure is achieved 'when all of the presiding macro-questions and all the micro-questions that are relevant to settling the macro-questions have been answered'.[63] In the final scene (1577–673), whereas Aegisthus' appearance is supposed to help Clytemnestra secure a formal closure, more references to Orestes affirm that the cycle of violence is not yet complete.[64] In addition to lines 1507–12 and 1530–36 discussed above, the men of the Chorus point twice to Orestes' future return, this time in the presence of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus: 'Is Orestes alive somewhere, | to come back home with fortune's favour | and to be the all-victorious killer of these two here?' (1646–48); 'No, not if fortune directs Orestes to come here' (1667). Thus, the promise of a complete closure cannot be fulfilled. It needs to be reminded here that Cassandra was the first to foreshadow Orestes' homecoming (1280–84): 'there will come another in turn to avenge us, | a child born to kill his mother, one to exact penalty for his father. | A fugitive, a wanderer, an exile from this land | he will come home to put a coping-stone on these ruinous acts for his family; | his father thrown on his back on the ground will bring him back'. Thus, the narrative, instead of

[59] Note the striking absence of a similar discussion at the end of the *Libation Bearers*.

[60] Roberts (1993) quote from 577.

[61] Roberts (1993) 587.

[62] Roberts (1993) 575–77.

[63] Carroll (2007) 6.

[64] For another discussion on Aegisthus' appearance with regard to the future of the plot, see also 7.3.3. 'Surprise through unexpected appearances' below.

looking forward to closing all open matters, allows information leakages which will not be processed as such. It will, nevertheless, stay suspended until Orestes' appearance in the following play. Questions such as 'Where is Orestes now?' and 'Where will Orestes return to his homeland?' are considered as micro-questions in the *Agamemnon*, as they are not related 'to the presiding question directly and completely'. However, they play an important role in undermining closure.[65]

In strict terms, considering that the main events, the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra, have been successfully committed, the necessity and desire for closure have been met. Nonetheless, Clytemnestra's certainty ('These things had to be as we have done them', 1658–59; 'In our twin mastery of this house | [I] and you will | make things [well]', 1672–73) is overshadowed by the multiple references to Orestes.

3.4. Closure as inconclusiveness in the *Libation Bearers*

In the *Libation Bearers*, τέλος and its cognates appears in a handful of cases, but they all require a careful look. First, the Chorus prays to Zeus for an end to come with the infinitive τελευτᾶν meaning 'to grant an ending' (306). Then, Orestes himself seeks for the end in the Chorus' narration of Clytemnestra's dream: 'And the end of her story (τελευτᾷ)? Its culmination (καρανοῦται)?' (534).[66] Although the matricide is fulfilled, the *telos* as end is not yet obvious, as Orestes confesses: 'I have no knowledge how it will end (τελεῖ)' (1021). Orestes' aporetic preoccupations transcend the limits of the plot and expand to broader closure.

What Duncan Kennedy points out about Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid* may be applied to Orestes in the *Libation Bearers* as well: 'Aeneas searches for a shape or form, in which the events which join beginning to end are meaningfully linked […] He thus seeks to understand his own situation precisely in narrative terms.'[67] Both Orestes and Aeneas realise that their perspective of events is very limited, so they are not able to know and speak about the end. However, while for Aeneas *finis*, the Latin equivalent for τέλος, 'can signify not simply an

[65] Carroll (2007) 6.

[66] See n. 46.

[67] Kennedy (2013) 50.

end, but a *trajectory* and a *goal* as well',[68] for the Orestes of the end of the *Libation Bearers* τέλος fails to unite the achievement of a goal, the sense of closure to be derived from it and the end of the play.

Another cognate of *telos* with significant closural preoccupations is the adjective τελεσφόρος, which was also discussed in the previous chapter in association with its relation to purpose and fulfilment. Goldhill has pointed out that the position of τελεσφόρος in the *Oresteia* goes beyond the textual level:

> Reading τελεσφόρος cannot be simple, then. It opens a series of questions about the teleology of reading, about criticism's object (in all its senses) and method, about the boundaries and excesses of meaning— 'a (ceaseless) process of questioning' to question the (teleological) answer. Reading τελεσφόρος involves one in an inconclusive process.[69]

As I have tried to show throughout my discussion on *telos*, the issues raised in the quotation above have much wider implications than Goldhill allows. However, when we look at the word τελεσφόρος as Aeschylus uses it for Clytemnestra and Orestes, it is certainly evident that it does not operate in total alignment with its meaning as 'the one who brings *telos* as fulfilment or end'. Although by being τελεσφόροι Clytemnestra and Orestes hope to put an end to the familial troubles and bring to a conclusion in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* respectively, neither of them can provide a complete closure. As we saw above, Orestes even realises and articulates this weakness himself.

The *Libation Bearers* ends with the Chorus' observation that the promise for fulfilment driven by the matricide has been misleading.[70] Prior to that, they express their positive thinking using an adjective cognate of τέλος, παντελὴς, which with χρόνος (965) means 'all-fulfilling Time'.[71] They hope that the 'all-fulfilling Time' will bring an end to the misfortunes

[68] Kennedy (2013, 50). See also Kennedy (2013, 51) comments on the use of *finis* in the *Aeneid*: Aeneas says 'god will grant an end (*finem*) to these things also' 1. 199, Venus says to Jupiter 'what end (*finem*) of toils do you give?' 1. 241.

[69] Goldhill (1984b) 174.

[70] Roberts (2005, 142) notes the Chorus' prominent role in the Aeschylean endings. Specifically, in the second and third play of the *Oresteia* they say the last word.

[71] See p. 45 and n. 73.

and inaugurate a new era for the house of the Atreides. They also reiterate this wishful thought with another cognate of τέλος, the verbal form ἐτελέσθη (1067), meaning 'come to fulfilment', which is positioned less than ten lines before the end of the play. Their expectation for fulfilment becomes more evident through their repeated use of the number-three pattern, according to which, the sequence of the beginning, the middle and the end constitute a unity.[72] The first reference to the pattern is about the third and, they hope last, crime in the family, the matricide, ('the third family-storm', 1066). The second reference to the pattern is about Orestes who is the third saviour ('a third has come from somewhere to bring safety', 1073). These references are reminiscent of previous references to the number three: the third draught of the Fury for Aegisthus' death (577–78) in the *Libation Bearers* and the third libation to Zeus (246–47) and blow to Agamemnon (1386–87) in the *Agamemnon*.[73] However, the Chorus unknowingly casts doubt on whether Orestes is the saviour of the house or its destruction: 'Now in turn a third has come from somewhere to bring safety–or should I say, death?' (1073–74). The grade of insecurity increases until the two last lines of the play where any wishful thinking is overridden, and the expectation for fulfilment becomes an urgent desire for an end which is nevertheless being put in doubt.[74] The meaning of τέλος as end is here stressed with the words κρανεῖ, καταλήξει and μετακοιμισθέν: 'So where will it end (κρανεῖ), where will the power of Ruin sink into sleep (μετακοιμισθὲν) and cease (καταλήξει)?' (1075–76).[75] As Oliver Taplin puts it in relation to the stage action at this point in the play:

> The rapidity with which the play draws to a close after the murder, contrasting with the *Agamemnon*, conveys with a horrible vividness the speed and sureness of the Erinyes' work. Once Orestes has gone, the chorus quickly disperses (down an eisodos, not into the palace) with a few anapaestic lines of shocked

[72] For the significance of number three in Aeschylus, see Clay (1969); Rosenmeyer (1982) 333. Aristotle discusses this significance in his work *On the Heavens* (268a11–13): 'It is just as the Pythagoreans say, the whole world and all things in it are summed up in the number three; for **end** (**τελευτὴ**), middle and beginning give the number of the whole, and their number is the triad.' Translation by Guthrie (1939).

[73] See Raeburn & Thomas (2011, on 1386–87) for a brief overview of similar references in the *Oresteia*.

[74] Collard (2002) on 1074; Goldhill (1984b) 171.

[75] Sommerstein's translation (2008).

> response. The play ends with a question, literally; everything, far from being finished, is still unresolved.[76]

Even if in the *Agamemnon* Clytemnestra's power to bring things to fruition is being undermined by several references to Orestes, in the *Libation Bearers* Orestes' power is even more obviously undermined by the references to the Furies (1026, 1048–50, 1053–54, 1057–58, 1061–62). These references are signs which point to the upcoming and ongoing crisis, a perpetual crisis in Kermode's words which is always immanent. This crescendo will reach its peak at the end of the *Eumenides*, where, as we will see below, the idea of crisis as something immanent will be present in the most definite and explicit way.

Considering all the above, the end of the *Libation Bearers* is marked by a disjunction between the meaning of τέλος as *goal* and *completion*. By contrast to the *Agamemnon*, where the narrative concludes with the aftermath of the murders, as Clytemnestra and Aegisthus look at a bright future ahead, in the *Libation Bearers* Orestes is forced to flee despite the success of the plan to kill Clytemnestra. Neither of the two plays concludes with the core event of the murder, and, in both cases, the concluding scene finds the murderers in the defensive. However, whereas the *Agamemnon* ends with a sense of control and security, at least as expressed by the characters, the ending of the *Libation Bearers* engages more vividly with the emergence of an interminable anxiety.[77]

3.5. Closure as possibility in the *Eumenides*

The *Eumenides* begins with Pythia in the prologue whose appearance signals the temporal and spatial transition to Delphi.[78] As Martin Revermann argues drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin, the *Eumenides* is the only surviving play which combines fluid space (Delphi, Athens) and discontinuous time.[79] Orestes resorts as a suppliant to Delphi, while the Furies are still

[76] Taplin (1977) 361.

[77] Dunn argues (1996, 23) that in Aeschylus there is no consistency in the means of ending.

[78] Dunn (1996, 22) notes that there is an 'unparalleled case of the continuity' between the closing lines of the *Libation Bearers* with the beginning of the *Eumenides*.

[79] Revermann (2008) 256, on spatial (239–48) and temporal dynamics (248–56).

pursuing him to take revenge for the committed matricide. Although Orestes is finally exonerated, the promise of his return to Argos lies beyond the final scene of the play which provides an early, Aeschylean example of what Dunn argues for Euripidean endings: 'the infinite continuum of experience cannot be contained in a single dramatic action'.[80] As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, scholars have tended to read Aeschylus' endings as uncomplicated. For instance, Dunn argues that 'the process of closure is clearly a central problem for Aeschylus in the *Eumenides*' only in the sense that 'he wants to bring within the action of the trilogy any possible loose ends.'[81] Similarly, in his study on closure in Greek tragedy, Gerd Kremer argues that the *Eumenides* is the only tragedy by Aeschylus which belongs to the resolution type. These remarks do not do justice to the ways in which the *Eumenides* problematises the future as part of a larger dramatic unit that consists of four plays.

The textual preoccupations of the *Eumenides* with τέλος as end revolve around Orestes' τέλος as seen by the character himself, as well as by Apollo, Athena, and the Furies. With the phrase 'through to the end' (διά τέλους, 64) Apollo promises his support to Orestes in the future, without, however, clarifying the connotations of this τέλος: does it imply Orestes' acquittal, which does not take place at the end of the play? Does it refer to this end of the play? Or does it refer to Orestes' triumphant return to Argos? Orestes uses the word τέλος with the same ambiguity. When he claims that he 'await[s] the outcome of judgement' (ἀναμένω τέλος δίκης, 243),[82] he could be referring to the end of the trial or to a kind of restoration of justice associated through a return to a normal life back in the house of the Atreides. The quest for an end preoccupies Athena as well. With the word τέρμα, a synonym of τέλος as end, Athena asks the Furies about their pursuit of Orestes and when it will reach an end (422): 'And where has the killer **an end** of his flight (**τέρμα** φυγής)?'. Even without knowing the details of the case, she desires to know the range and boundaries of the Furies' power. The Furies declare that humans' efforts to end their troubles will be in vain with another synonym of τέλος, the noun λῆξιν (505).[83] The perpetuity of Orestes' ordeal is also brought out in their repetition of the idea of τέλος as end in the phrase '**an end** is appointed

[80] Dunn (1996) 83.

[81] Dunn (1996) 79: 'In the context of anticipating the concluding prophecy'.

[82] See p. 35 on the interpretation of τέλος δίκης in the context of the meaning of τέλος as purpose and fulfilment.

[83] From the verb λήγω, also used in the last lines of the *Libation Bearers*: καταλήξει (1075).

and waits (κύριον μένει **τέλος**, 544)', where the verb μένω stresses the unspecified period of time involved.[84] Finally, the word τέρμα reoccurs as end, when Orestes himself realises the nodal nature of his own future: 'A noose is **the end** (**τέρματ'**) for me now, or to see the daylight!' (746).[85] Here Orestes uses exactly the same term Athena used in line 422. But whereas Athena has previously used the same word τέρμα as end with φυγής with regard to the possibility of his flight and salvation, Orestes employs it to the opposite effect to refer to a possible death punishment. This handful of references to *telos* as end show that the *Eumenides* is less preoccupied with this particular meaning of the word than it is with *telos* as purpose and fulfilment that we saw in the previous chapter. It also suggests that it is less important than τέλος as end in the previous two plays. In fact, the characters' need for an end is frustrated by a plot that has its own dynamic that takes us beyond the case of Orestes.

Apart from the words which signify *telos* as end, one can find in the *Eumenides* a plethora of expressions which point beyond the case of Orestes and beyond the end of the play and towards an extra-dramatic future. Apollo urges Orestes to leave Delphi and resort to Athens where judges will save him '**once and for all** (**εἰς τό πᾶν**) from these miseries' (84). Although Delphi is initially presented as a land promising future resolution, it is finally unable to meet those expectations, while Athens provides the hope of a 'fresh start'.[86]

As soon as the Furies assemble in a chorus (parodos 143–77), they pronounce twice that Orestes will *never* be free: '…. this man, who after he flees below is **never** (**οὔποτ'**) to be free' (175–76), 'I will **never** (**ποτέ**) leave this man alone!' (225). As the Furies put it, Orestes' future is characterised by finality (which comes with certainty) without finitude (which comes without temporal boundaries), which is reiterated in the Furies' binding song: 'and after death he is not too free' (339–40). Similar adverbial phrases pointing towards the distant future are used by Apollo (three times) and Orestes (once) to promise eternal alliance between Argos and Athens: 'forever'[87] (εἰς τό πᾶν, 291), 'for all time' (εἰς τό πᾶν χρόνου, 670), 'to eternity' (αἰανῶς, 672), 'always' (αἰεί, 773). Athena also attributes eternal power to the new legal system of her establishment ('for all time', εἰς ἅπαντ᾽…. χρόνον, 484). Although this power

[84] For the use of the verb μένω in the *Oresteia*, see Goldhill (1994b) 172.

[85] This node is further discussed in sections 4.4.1 and 5.4.1 below.

[86] Revermann (2008) 246.

[87] Sommerstein's translation (2008).

is questioned by the Furies who warn of ongoing consequences ('in time hereafter', μεταῦθις ἐν χρόνω, 498), Athena insists that that the authority of the new legal system will be everlasting ('for all time', εἰς τόν αἰανῆ χρόνον, 572; 'for the rest of time', ἔσται δὲ καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν, 683; 'always', αἰεί, 684; 'for the future', εἰς τὸ λοιπὸν, 708 and 1031). In the negotiations between Athena and the Furies following Orestes' acquittal, the goddess guarantees that their power will last forever ('for evermore', ἐς αἰεὶ, 836; 'for ever', εἰς τό πᾶν, 891; 'for all time', χρόνου, 898). Equally, the citizens must 'always' (αἰεί, 992) act respectfully towards them as the newly established goddesses, the Awesome Ones (1041). Finally, Athena's own victory will last 'for all time' (διὰ παντός, 975). All the above demonstrate a preoccupation of the characters with a future that lies outside the boundaries of the narrative. Such references, alongside the play's avoidance of self-closural references (such as 'last', 'finished', 'end', 'rest', 'peace', or 'no more'[88]), raise the expectation of continuation and, therefore, undermine closure.[89]

Although the core event around which the plot of the *Eumenides* is structured is Orestes' acquittal, its actualisation does not lead to the end of the play which is postponed for another 270 lines (778–1047). Throughout these lines another complication emerges, 'a beginning of a new beginning,' as Taplin puts it.[90] This is accentuated by the fact that the final scene of the play (916–1047) does not comply with Aristotle's definition of exodos as 'the whole portion of a tragedy following the final choral song' (1452b21–22).[91] First, Athena sets out to convince the Furies to renounce their present role and eschew from perpetual acts of retaliation in the future. In exchange, the goddess promises to transform them into the 'Awesome Goddesses' (Σεμναί Θεαί,[92] 1041) (778–915). Second, the final scene (916–1047) commences with the Furies conceding to Athena's offer through the future verbal form δέξομαι 'I shall accept' (916).[93] In the last 45 lines of the play (1003–1047), a procession is

[88] Smith (1968) 172. See id. 56: 'closure is, of course, always weakened by the expectation of continuation.'

[89] Cf. Dunn (1996) 79: 'The other surviving tragedians do not seem to have shared Euripides' interest in the temporal continuum.'

[90] Taplin (2003²) 108. Also: 'The *Oresteia* does not end with the acquittal of Orestes.'

[91] For a bibliographical on the final scene of the *Eumenides*, see Chiasson (1999–2000) 156 n. 50.

[92] cf. 383 Σεμναί ('Awesome'). For an overview of the topic of the Furies in Greek tragedy, see Brown (1984) and on 'the Erinyes in the *Oresteia*' (1983). For the cult of Σεμναί Θεαί (with ancient sources), see Konstantinidou (2014) 17 n. 43.

[93] Taplin (2003², 108–9) discusses the scenic sequence of this part of the play.

dramatised, consisting of an unusually large number of characters on stage:[94] Athena as the leader, the newly established Awesome Goddesses, the members of the Areopagus council and, possibly, a supplementary chorus.[95] The number of participants increases further if we take Athena's invitation to sing along to include the audience (1039). In any case, the very last line finds the participants celebrating ritually the beginning of something new (1047): 'Cry out your joy now, in song!'.[96]

Pfister, in his discussion of dramatic endings, argues that the terms 'closed' and 'open' signal the grade of the discrepancies each type of ending carries.[97] Closed endings in drama, which are regarded as 'the norm in classical theories of drama',[98] are associated with a very high level of resolution of all open questions and conflicts at the ending of the narrative. This can be manifested on stage, according to Pfister, through a series of devices such as the appearance of the whole cast, festivities, speeches looking forward to a secure future, and comments towards the audience.[99] Those can, of course, be observed at varying levels in the final scene of the *Eumenides* (916–1047). For instance, although there is no full cast appearance on stage at the end of the play, there is, however, a large number of participants, among whom are some of the main characters, who participate in a ceremonial procession.[100] Similarly, Athena's last words fifteen lines before the end of the play look forward to a better future to come: 'And let the | light of fire set out on its way, so that this company for the | land may **in future** (**τὸ λοιπὸν**) be pre-eminent for its goodwill, with the | fortune of noble manhood!' (1029–31). This callout for reconciliation has led Roberts to argue that the *Eumenides* is one of the plays which end 'with deliverance, reunion, or reconciliation'.[101] This sense of

[94] Sommerstein (2008) 482–83 n. 198.

[95] Easterling (1988, 99 and n. 28). Taplin argues that the jurors act as the second chorus in the final scene (1977, 410–11).

[96] Sommerstein (2008) on 1039 n. 202; (1989) on 1039, see also note on 566.

[97] The terms 'open' and 'closed' are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

[98] Pfister (1988) 95–96.

[99] Pfister (1988) 95–96.

[100] This is not the only play by Aeschylus to conclude with a procession. Garvie (2014, 23) notes that, although the *Seven against Thebes* ends with a funeral procession, such a device does not necessarily point to a closed ending.

[101] Roberts (2005) 136. In Roberts (1993) reconciliation is filed under the cultural markers for closure (see also p. 10 and n. 60). Whitmarsh in his discussion of the different senses of *telos* in ancient Greek novel (2011, 177–213) also classifies reconciliation as a closural motif. Fowler (1989, 81–82) has noted for the closural motif of reconciliation at the end of the *Iliad* that: 'The *Iliad* ends with a truce, not a peace treaty, and we know that the war is not over'. This sounds very relevant to the end of the *Eumenides* as well.

reconciliation also leads Gerd Kremer to classify *Eumenides*' ending as 'Handlungsschlüsse', those which conclude the action with a kind of resolution.[102] Although Kremer's twofold model of endings in Greek tragedy is one of the few studies mapping the ending trends of the Greek tragic plays, it does not take into account the tragic endings' complications and inconsistencies which cannot be resolved by a mere classification using content-related criteria.

Although the ending of the *Eumenides* takes place in the context of conflict and reconciliation which could potentially meet the standards for an uncomplicated and neat closure, several informational discrepancies within the tragic narrative undermine that expectation.[103] It converses with Pfister's type of 'open ending'.[104] Because of the loose ends of the agreement between Athena and the Furies, the threat of a crisis hovers over the whole ending. As a reminder of Carroll's point mentioned above, 'closure obtains when all of the presiding macro-questions and all the micro-questions that are relevant to settling the macro-questions have been answered'.[105] The agreement between the Furies and Athena leads to their *conditional* transformation into Eumenides. This transformation is conditional because it is contingent upon the citizens' conduct and practices. As such, it raises a series of questions such as whether the Eumenides and the Athenian citizens will succeed in their cooperation: how will the Eumenides live in peace with the Athenians? Will the Athenians meet the expectations that the Awesome Goddesses and Athena have set? And what happens if the Eumenides do not comply with the agreement? This set of macro-questions is also accompanied by micro-questions arisen by the abrupt transformation of Furies into the Awesome Goddesses.

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[102] Kremer (1971) 118–22, 127–28. The second type is the one which in the conclusion the act and the offender are presented and interpreted as fate ('Ecceschlusse' or 'Präsentationsschluss'). See also Iakov (2012) who draws on Kremer.

[103] Chiasson (1999–2000, 155) comments that the ending of the *Eumenides* 'is fundamentally progressive but not utterly euphoric'. Fusillo (1997, 227) refers to the *Eumenides* as an example of a play with a 'polyedric range of solution' combining 'tensions and contradictions' in a 'happy ending'. Marshall (2017, 12–13) argues that the *Eumenides* 'does not produce an unambiguously positive result'; Collard (2002, xlii) notes that the *Eumenides* 'transforms the inevitabilities of *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers* into confident hope'. Hall (2015) argues for Aeschylus' ambiguity between a 'superficial message' of reconciliation (p. 256) and 'a dark undertow' (p. 267). For a reading of the *Eumenides*' ending from the perspective of deconstruction (between 'progressive and reactionary label' n. 67) see Goldhill (1984a, 279–83).

[104] Pfister (1988) 96.

[105] Carroll (2007) 6.

After the verb δέξομαι ('I shall accept', 916), the Furies finally assent to the deal which was offered by Athena, and the agreement between the two parts is applied with immediate effect. However, this contradicts the Furies' perseverance from the beginning of the play to lead the matter to the end (until line 891 in a total of 1047 lines). Athena's offer comes at line 804 and their acceptance at 916. In the meantime, the Furies have been uttering curses for the city of Athens (778–891) which are substituted by blessing songs at the end of the play (916–1047). At the end of the play, despite the anger, the cursing, and the disputes between the Furies, Orestes and their delegates, all conflicts appear to have been put aside as if they have never existed. This tends to invalidate the reliability of the prior narrative. The answers to these questions are left open, as they belong to a future which is for the readers and spectators to contemplate. Thus, the start of the new era which is promised by Athena with her last words in the play is not necessarily rosy.[106] It makes possible the generation of possible outcomes for the near and distant future. Although Dunn argues that in Aeschylus loose ends are tied up before the end of the play as opposed to Euripides where time is stretched to fit the future events,[107] I have argued that in the case of the *Eumenides* time is stretched in ways that leave a number of questions open.

Another example of how cognitive discrepancies persist at the end of the narrative and suggest an open ending has to do with Orestes' departure 270 lines before the end of the narrative (777). Unlike the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* where the macro-questions about Clytemnestra's and Orestes's future *are at least addressed* before the end of each play, the narrative of the *Eumenides withholds* significant information about Orestes' future. The macro-question that lingers is 'what finally happens to Orestes?'.[108] Although Orestes can return to the human community after his acquittal, this is not what is celebrated on stage. His announcement that he will return to Argos as the new ruler (754–62) is never revisited in the rest of the play. The character has vanished without leaving any marks, as is also the case with Electra in the *Libation Bearers*.[109] However, unlike Electra, this is not an abrupt disappearance but a gradual transition from a character who holds together much of the rest of the narrative

[106] Garvie (2014) 39. Garvie observes a 'slight note of uncertainty raised by the conditional nature of the promise'.

[107] Dunn (1996) 79–80.

[108] Bacon (2001) 51.

[109] For both Electra's and Orestes' futures as unexposed, see 5.4.2.

of the three tragic plays into a missing link.[110] Early signs of this can be observed in the trial scene (463–68, 611–13).[111] As Roberts puts it: 'Orestes here relinquishes all claims to action and to interpretation; he becomes a suppliant subject to the decisions of others, can only state what he has done, not judge it'.[112] At the end of the *Eumenides*, the readers' and the spectators' expectations for a complete resolution, which were built up from the beginning of the play, remain unfulfilled despite Orestes' successful plea for acquittal.

Even though Orestes is freed from the crime of the matricide, he is overshadowed by the new institutions established by Athena. This is reminiscent of the Chorus' remark early in the narrative that Orestes will soon be a shadow and not a human anymore (σκιάν, 302). Additionally, the absence of any reference to stories which tell of his purification in various places in the Peloponnese demonstrates his insignificance.[113] During the trial, Apollo takes responsibility for the matricide and argues on behalf of Orestes. For the accounts of the myth, Orestes is Agamemnon's and Clytemnestra's son, the man who committed the most heinous of crimes. His narrative life ends upon the matricide and begins and ends with him as a wanderer.[114]

One final example of how the *Eumenides* challenges a tight ending has to do with the role of Athena. Although, as Lowe argues, the character of Athena in the *Eumenides* inaugurates the device of *deus/dea ex machina* ('god/goddess from the machine') in the tragic theatre, Dunn argues that what we have in the *Eumenides* is only the precursor of a device that will establish itself some decades later through Euripides' plays.[115] Despite any differences between these views, they are in line with *how* Athena' intervention is dramatised in the play. Typically, the *deus/dea ex machina* is a device activated at the very end of a tragic play, when the loose ends of the plot cannot be tied together in any other way.[116] However, Athena emerges as one of the main characters in the *Eumenides* as early as in line 397, where she

[110] There is a possibility that Orestes appears in the narrative of *Proteus* as well (see below).

[111] For the mythological accounts of Orestes' trial, see Mitchell-Boyask (2009) 22–23. For an analysis of the theatricality of the trial scene, see Bakewell (2013).

[112] Roberts (1985) 295.

[113] Garvie (2014) 39. See also Rosenmeyer (1982) 344.

[114] Taplin (2003²) 24.

[115] Lowe (2000) 167–68; Dunn (1996) 26, 37–38. Sommerstein (2010c², 23) and Rosenmeyer (1982, 347–49) reject this even as a possibility.

[116] For the use of the *deus ex machina* device in Greek drama, see Dunn (1996); Easterling (1993); Mastronarde (1990).

appears upon the request for her assistance, transporting herself from Scamander to Athens.[117] She is authorised by both Orestes and the Chorus to make up 'the final decision' (αἰτίας τέλος, 434). Athena's role involves listening to both sides, that of the prosecutors, the Furies, and that of the defendant, Orestes. It also involves the announcement of the trial as the way resolving the matter (470–89, 566–75) and the introduction of the voting system (674–75, 681–710). Her function reaches its peak with her own voting and final decision in favour of the defendant (734–43, 752–53), about 300 lines before the end of the play and the final scene where the deployment of the *deus/dea ex machina* device would be expected. Pfister includes *deus/dea ex machina* in the classical form of closed dramatic ending, where 'the informational deficits and value conflicts cannot be necessarily or plausibly resolved from the information provided in the text itself'.[118] This type of resolution is achieved by Athena well before the final scene. Therefore, the early deployment of the *dea ex machina* device in the play dissociates it from discussions around closure in the final scene of the play.

What is the role of Athena in the final scene of the play then?[119] It could be argued that the role of Athena changes from arbitrator in the trial scene (until 777) to mediator in the 'crucial transitional bargaining'[120] (until 916), and then to director until the end, where she leads the procession off stage (1047).[121] In the lines which follow the announcement of Orestes' acquittal (752–53), Apollo's exit (possibly after 753) and Orestes' exit (777), Athena's role as arbitrator reaches its end. She is now taking on the role of the mediator between the city of Athens and the Furies. From line 778 until 916, Athena is trying to persuade the Furies not to realise their destructive plans for the city of Athens in reaction to Orestes' acquittal. Such a reaction would be the only scenario which would be consistent with their stance earlier in the

[117] On the means by which Athena arrives on stage, see Chiasson (1999–2000) 142 and n. 11. More recently, on the use of μηχανή in the *Eumenides* see Jouanna (2009, 79–80, 69–71, 93, 118), cited by Garvie (2016, 47).

[118] Pfister (1988) 96. Aristotle argues against the efficiency of *deus ex machina* device to secure resolution (1454b1–5): 'Clearly the denouements (λύσεις) of plots should issue from the plot as such, and not from a *deus ex machina* as in *Medea* and the scene of departure in the *Iliad*. The *deus ex machina* should be employed for events outside the drama (τὰ ἔξω τοῦ δράματος) —preceding events beyond human knowledge, or subsequent events requiring prediction and announcement; for we ascribe to the gods the capacity to see all things.' See also n. 9 and n. 37.

[119] Any ambiguities of the *Eumenides*' ending have been mostly discussed in the context of Athena's vote. See for example, Dunn (1997, 38): 'the play ends ambiguously because we do not know if the case has been resolved by Athena or the juries.'

[120] Taplin (1977) 410.

[121] Although Easterling (1993) discusses the directorial function of the gods on stage in the beginnings and endings of tragic plays, she does not include Aeschylus' *Eumenides* in her set of examples.

play. In the final scene (916–1047), having fulfilled her role as mediator, Athena is performing the role of the one who directs the exit of the characters through a procession. Athena's functions as arbitrator, as mediator, and as director are reminiscent of her appearances in the *Odyssey*. However, while in the epic those roles are combined, in the *Eumenides* they are fragmented and successive. As a result, the reader and the spectator needs to decide: either Athena's final role as director of a grand fiesta[122] is celebratory and goes beyond her limited powers earlier in the play, or it calls for redefining what constitutes a successful ending from the kind one would expect from a stage epiphany.[123] This dilemma opens up issues about crisis as regulation and crisis as debate which transcend the world of the characters and need to be addressed by readers and spectators.[124]

3.6. Closure as desire in *Proteus*

In a discussion of ending in the *Oresteia* we need to take into account its unity as a set of four plays, and, more specifically, the contribution of the satyr drama as the final play to an understanding of the narrative as a whole. Although the play has been largely neglected due to its fragmentary nature, I argue that there are benefits to be had from reflection on its plot and, more specifically, on its temporal relations with the tragic plays that precede it. In what follows, I offer an example of how *Proteus* can participate in a discussion about temporalities of the future in the *Oresteia*, and, more specifically, about how it employs the idea of closure as a way of coming to terms with the future.

Before anything else, I must address the issue of the chronological placement of the events dramatised in *Proteus* within the storyline of the *Oresteia*. In the *Agamemnon*, the herald announces that Menelaus is considered as missing since the storm in the Aegean Sea (671–79) when many members of the Greek army had also perished. It is likely that one more reference to Menelaus is made in the *Libation Bearers* (1041), just before Orestes' departure from Argos due to his pursuit by the Furies. Although the line and its context are dubious, one can assume

[122] Taplin (1977) 410–15.

[123] Henrichs (1995) 64.

[124] The concept of *crisis* is discussed throughout Chapter 4 below.

that Orestes is wishing for Menelaus' return.[125] Thus, Menelaus is still considered as missing at the end of the *Libation Bearers*. There are no references to Menelaus in the *Eumenides*. Considering that at the end of *Proteus* Menelaus' return to Argos still lies in the future, it is plausible to assume that the satyr play follows the *Eumenides*.

As it is unanimously agreed that Aeschylus' version of Menelaus' adventures after Troy follows the *Odyssey* and not Stesichorus' *Palinode*,[126] it is useful to look at the corresponding passages. The references to Proteus occur in *Odyssey* 4, where Menelaus shares his adventures in Egypt before his return to Argos with Telemachus (4.349–586). Proteus is the sea-god who, as Eidothea, his daughter, claims, 'can speak infallibly' (4.385). After hard efforts, Menelaus finally succeeds in obtaining Proteus' knowledge about the past (Agamemnon's murder) and advice on the future. Menelaus must hurry to Argos and participate either in the act of revenge against Aegisthus, or, if this has already been exacted by Orestes, in the funeral rites. Similarly, in *Odyssey* 3, Nestor, the king of Pylos, recounts that Agamemnon had already been killed while Menelaus was in Egypt, and that, when Menelaus returned, Orestes had already killed Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. The following counterfactual is expressed by Nestor (3. 254–57):

> I will tell everything—though you can guess| what would have happened if
> fair Menelaus| had found Aegisthus living in his halls| on his return.[127]

It would be plausible to assume that such a counterfactual might have intrigued Aeschylus: it expands the field of the known storyline by raising the possibility of Menelaus' taking revenge for his brother instead of Orestes' taking revenge for his father. Such a possibility could have been pursued in the *Proteus* in some way (counterfactual, conditional, or otherwise), and it would have been at odds with Orestes' role in the *Libation Bearers*. Not only would it focus attention on the possibility of revenge being taken by Menelaus rather than Orestes, but also the primary target of that revenge would have been Aegisthus rather than Clytemnestra.

[125] See Garvie (1986) on 1040–41, Collard (2002) on 1040–43; Brown (2018) 444–45.

[126] See p. 25 and n. 106.

[127] Wilson (2018).

If one tries to map *Proteus*' storyline onto the *Odyssey*'s, one reasonable conclusion might be that *Proteus* ends chronologically somewhere after the end of the *Libation Bearers*, or even after the *Eumenides*. This might be used to explain why Menelaus does not appear in the tragic trilogy. An alternative possibility for the events dramatised in the *Proteus* might be that they fit chronologically somewhere between the *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*. This would not necessarily be contradicted by Menelaus' absence from the *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*, as his return voyage could have been predicted by Proteus to be long and perilous (as in *Odyssey* 4). As mentioned above, the identification of the starting point of *Proteus*' plot poses greater difficulties. If one assumes that the satyr drama kicks off with the shipwreck of Menelaus and his crew near Egypt, such a moment can be placed anywhere before or after the *Agamemnon*. This might or might not be the shipwreck of the herald's speech in lines (671–79). It would certainly provide a justification for the length of time Menelaus spends in the land of Egypt and for the long interval before his homecoming.

We cannot be sure how long Menelaus was delayed in Egypt: if the narrative of the *Proteus* follows closely the temporal framework of the *Odyssey*, it enacts events that lasted twenty days. Nor do we know how long Menelaus takes to return to Greece. A technique that may have been exploited in the *Proteus* to address the issue of events unfolding over a period of time is that of narrative jumps. For example, placing the *Proteus* after the *Eumenides* gives the option that Menelaus arrives in Egypt at the point when Orestes leaves Athens for Argos. Menelaus will only return to Argos (an event not dramatised in the *Oresteia*) when Orestes returns to Argos (an event also not dramatised in the *Oresteia*), after the end of the *Eumenides*, in a distant future which lies within the audience's imagination. If *Proteus*' plot starts after (or even before) the beginning of the tragic trilogy, a narrative jump could have been employed of the kind we find in the *Agamemnon* when the news for the capture of Troy is immediately succeeded by Agamemnon's arrival.[128]

There are two objections regarding such speculations. The first is that trying to understand the *Proteus* through the *Odyssey* must have limits. The narrative of the *Oresteia* demonstrates that the handling of the myth took a significant turn in the hands of Aeschylus. Second, the surviving fragments of the *Proteus* suggest that the play may start with a

[128] On narrative jumps, see also 3.2.

shipwreck from which Menelaus and his companions recover and then start fighting for their return. It is unclear if this is before or after Menelaus' gathering of riches. It is not inconceivable that the gathering was stopped by another shipwreck. This is why it may be misleading to read the *Proteus* via the *Odyssey*. What we can do is to keep the *Odyssey* as a possible source for Aeschylus but without excluding other possibilities.

Effectively, the connection between the satyr play and the tragic plays does not depend exclusively on where exactly it fits within the story of the tetralogy. The satyr drama actually coexists with the tragic plays, as Griffith argues, 'side by side, face to face or back to back, as alternative realities or parallel universes'.[129] In the context of the plays of the *Oresteia* lying in parallel universes, another term that can be used to describe their relationship is *paraquel*.[130] The term *paraquel* has been employed by Liveley to explore how Ovid's *Heroides* are interrelated with the master narratives of Homer and Virgil.[131] Although *Proteus* is not counterfactual for the three tragic plays of the *Oresteia* and these do not function as the master narratives for *Proteus*, there are still some similarities that would allow us to think of *Proteus* as a *paraquel*. Its plot is likely to have filled in temporal gaps within the story, it could have been placed 'somewhere on the established timeline'[132] of the other plays, while it also could have undermined their certainties (see my analysis below).Lyndsay Coo also discusses the issue of temporality in and of satyr drama, and more specifically, how in Aeschylus' tetralogies the satyr drama is interconnected with the three tragic plays.[133] Coo argues that *Proteus* needs to be seen as a nostalgic response to the *Agamemnon*, as the *Proteus* represents the happy past and the *Agamemnon* its grim aftermath.[134] Although both Griffith and Coo stress the need to examine the issue of temporality in the *Oresteia* as a tetralogy including the satyr drama, and not as a trilogy, in my discussion of *Proteus* I argue that *Proteus* with the happy end of Menelaus' *nostos* counterbalances the ambiguities of the ending of the *Eumenides* and the *Oresteia* as a tragic trilogy.

[129] Griffith (2015) 133. For the place of the satyr drama in the tetralogy see Coo (2019) 1 n. 1; Di Marco (2017) 434 n. 4, Griffith (2002). Sansone (2015) argues that *Proteus* has the first place in the tetralogy, a rather unpersuasive view.

[130] Morson (1994) 51.

[131] Liveley (2008) 95–96.

[132] Morson (1994) 51.

[133] Coo (2019). I would like to thank Dr Lyndsay Coo for allowing me to access her article prior to publication.

[134] Coo (2019) 13–18.

The *telos* dramatised in the *Proteus* is the exact opposite of the *telos* dramatised in the *Agamemnon*. Although both plays are preoccupied with a return to the *oikos* as the *end point* and *completion* of a long journey, one of them is destructive while the other one is blissful. With a common starting point in the sack of Troy,[135] or perhaps an even earlier common starting point in the departure of the Greek fleet from Aulis, they allow us to concentrate on two very different stories. While Menelaus' *telos* has a celebratory tone and is identified with 'fulfilment', Agamemnon's *telos* is identified with 'death' (as I have shown in Chapter 2).

Apart from the juxtaposition of the different types of *telos* between Menelaus and Agamemnon, *Proteus* also draws connections between Menelaus and Orestes. Although both characters are absent in the *Agamemnon*, their relevance for the plays to come is foreshadowed (as discussed in Chapter 5 below). Additionally, Menelaus' absence from Argos (while he was in Egypt) provoked Orestes to take over the responsibility to commit the matricide and Aegisthus' murder.[136] On the basis of what happens in the *Odyssey*, it is plausible to assume that Proteus, or even Eido, would have disclosed Orestes' return and plans to Menelaus, alongside with information about Agamemnon's murder (4.512–37, 543–47). Menelaus as second in the hierarchy after his brother Agamemnon would be keen to avenge Aegisthus, as the usurper putting an end to the familial rivalry, and Clytemnestra as his relative by affinity (rather than by blood). However, Menelaus is delayed in the land of Proteus, and Proteus' transformations are likely to have a significant contribution to this delay. With Menelaus being stranded away from Argos, only Orestes could retaliate for Agamemnon's murder. Indeed, in the *Libation Bearers*, Orestes expresses his despair for having to commit the matricide (899). While at that time his options were either to kill or to spare his mother, at the end of the tetralogy we (presumably) learn that this could have been different had Menelaus arrived on time at his ancestral land or had Orestes held off from killing his mother for the time being. This extra information can be seen as bringing back some of the uncertainty and anxiety of the aftermath at the matricide at the end of the *Libation Bearers*.

[135] Revermann (2008) 250.

[136] Sommerstein (2010b) 79–80.

Massimo di Marco, in his paper on the function of satyr play, employs Aristotle's concept of τέλος to demonstrate the purpose of *Proteus*' narrative as part of the grand narrative of the *Oresteia*:

> In his *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between τέλος, the end as something given, and σκοπός, the end as object of deliberation.[137] We could say, using this subtle distinction, that the τέλος immanent in satyr play….is to celebrate Dionysus, but, at the same time, that it is from this very necessity that the author derives his σκοπός: namely, to recover the joyful dimension proper to the civic cult of Dionysus, and to do so through the jokes of the satyrs. This is the main purpose of satyr play.[138]

According to Di Marco, then, the main purpose of the satyr drama and *Proteus* in particular is 'to recover' and 'to restore'. Considering *Proteus* as the fourth part of the *Oresteia* as a tetralogy invites us to think about the opportunities that this condition creates. First, it can be seen as an advantage for a tragedian to have a satyr drama following a tragic trilogy which deals with familial, social, and political malfunctions. The appearance of the satyrs places the narrative back to the world of myth which would be a 'release from the high stakes of tragedy'.[139] Second, the *Proteus* as the final play offers a conclusion which leaves the audience not less confused but 'more comfortable'.[140] Menelaus' and, possibly, Helen's return to Greece fulfils a much-expected sense of narrative closure in the shape of *nostos*.[141] Had the uncomfortable ending of the *Eumenides* been the final impression of the narrative for the Athenian audience of the 458 BCE, the plays performed would fail in fulfilling their educational role in the culture

[137]Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* (1227a7–9): 'But since one who deliberates always deliberates for the sake of some object (ἕνεκά τινος), and a man deliberating always has some aim (σκοπός) in view with reference to which he considers what is expedient, nobody deliberates about his End (περὶ μὲν τοῦ τέλους), but this is a starting-point or assumption.' For the distinction between τέλος and σκοπός see Di Marco (2017) 448 n. 50.

[138] Di Marco (2017) 447–48.

[139] Rehm (2017²) 83.

[140] Griffith (2002) 249.

[141] For Helen's role in *Proteus*, see Marshall (2015) 83–86. For the emotional bonds between people and places in the nostos patterns of the epic and drama, see Lowe (2018).

of fifth-century Athens.[142] This is no different for subsequent readers and spectators. It is only with the help of the *Proteus* that the *Oresteia* allows spectators and readers to return to the world of history with an understanding of the wider complexities of the concept of *telos* as closure.

3.7. Conclusion

In the *Oresteia* the concept of *telos* addresses the matter of closure in both textual and narratological terms. Depending on the nature of their preoccupations with future, each play situates *telos* where the two axes shift to intersect at various points (which operate simultaneously at the level of the characters and the level of the readers/spectators), one of which is between necessity and desire and the other between closure and crisis. The narrative of the *Agamemnon* manifests a desire and a necessity for closure which are fulfilled to a high degree by the end of the play, while the narrative of the *Libation Bearers* manifests a necessity for open-endedness, with the desire for closure remaining unfulfilled. The narrative of the *Eumenides* expresses both necessity and desire, gesturing towards a more conventional type of closure without fully following one. What is a movement from closure to crisis within the *Oresteia* as a trilogy, with openness emerging as the future's quintessential trait, is most likely accompanied by an opposite movement from crisis to closure when considering that the end of the narrative lies in a satyr drama.

As I have argued, the insights offered by this Chapter are useful for understanding the direct and indirect implications of *telos* as ending being the future towards which each one of the single plays progresses, either within or outside the narrative boundaries, challenging the conventional pairing of closure with a closed future. At the same time, they are also critical for engaging with the discussions that follow: the demonstration in Chapters 4–7 of how the future manifests itself in the *Oresteia* through diverse closural functions analysed in this Chapter efficiently prepares for considerations of the future as always open and, thus, being at risk.

[142] On the educational role of Athenian tragedy, see Scodel (2008); Rabinowitz (2008) 16–18, 33–58; Croally (1994) 17–47.

4

Telos between *future present* and *present future*

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines how the concept of *telos* in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* can be associated not only with textual and narratological approaches explored so far in Chapters 2 and 3, but also with contemporary discussions around the philosophy of time. Discussions of human time[1] are normally undertaken in and through historical narratives which tend to focus on the relationship between present and past.[2] By contrast, fictional narratives allow readers and spectators to go beyond traditional approaches of *telos* as a historical category, as these narratives are preoccupied not only with the past and the present, but also with the future. Therefore, in a text that dramatises present and future at both the level of the action (characters) and the level of reception (readers and spectators), I set out to explore how the concepts of *future present* and *present future* may operate as central narrative modes. The term *future present* refers to a future controlled by gods and fate, a closed future that 'can be known, 'seen' and anticipated', whereas the term *present future* is 'the imagined, planned, projected and produced future in and for the present.'[3] Whereas in the *Agamemnon telos* is activated as

[1] Here I use the concept of 'human time' in the sense of 'historical/phenomenological time', in order to differentiate it from 'cosmological time'. Just to note that in this instance I do not use the term in Ricoeur's meaning, according to whom human time is 'the fusion of phenomenological time and cosmological time and is organized after the manner of a narrative.' (1984 I, 13).

[2] For an example of an exception to this tendency, see Lianeri (2016), also mentioned in p. 4 and p. 8 of the Introduction. See also Danto (1985) e.g., 15.

[3] Quotes from Adam & Groves (2007) 18, 28, respectively.

future present and in the *Libation Bearers* it is used as *present future*, in the *Eumenides telos* is conceptualised as a fusion of *present future* and *future present*. A discussion of *Proteus* allows us to see how the satyr drama can revisit and juxtapose the different attitudes towards *future present* and *present future* of the three tragic plays.

The concepts of *future present* and *present future*, first coined by the social scientist Niklas Luhmann in his study of the structures of modern society, have been central to discussions about temporality in several other areas of interest during the last decades.[4] In their recent study, Barbara Adam and Chris Groves, drawing on Luhmann, discuss the definitions and the distinction between the two terms and suggest that *future present* is the divine future, the future known, seen and anticipated, already shaped with no much room for changes; whereas *present future* is 'the imagined, planned, projected and produced future in and for the present.'[5] I use the two concepts drawing on the definitions above and on the critical framework of the philosophy of history which heavily influences the current research on the topic. More specifically, I draw on Reinhart Koselleck and a third concept that he introduces, the concept of *futures past*.[6] *Futures past* conceptualises the tension between two historical categories, expectation (future) and experience (past), as it manifests itself across different cultures and times.[7] It draws attention to the pastness of the future, specifically on 'how expectations, hopes, or prognoses that are projected into the future become articulated into language' and 'how in a given present, the temporal dimensions of past and future are related'.[8] Jonas Grethlein draws systematically on Koselleck's term *futures past* as a framework for a discussion of ancient historiography. Grethlein combines Koselleck's terminology with the concept of *telos* which for him becomes the vantage point of the historian who looks at historical events retrospectively. For Grethlein, the historiographer is at the vantage point of knowing the events relating to the historical agent, and everything in the history that she or he writes about drives towards that point.[9] In Grethlein's approach, both experiential and

[4] Luhmann (1998) 70; (1982) 281; (1976) 142–43. On *future present* as a mode of philosophical thought, see also Pinsky (2003).

[5] Adam & Groves (2007) e.g., 18, 28, 176 n. 6, 200.

[6] Koselleck (2004) e.g., 3. The original German term is *vergangene Zukunft*.

[7] Koselleck (2004) 255–75.

[8] Koselleck (2004) 3.

[9] Grethlein (2016) 59–77; (2014); (2013a).

teleological narratives can be explored as two sides of the same coin which is *telos:* what is seen as future for the historical characters (experience) is seen as past for the historian (teleology).

Despite the large chronological and cultural gap that separates Aeschylus' plays from Luhmann's, Koselleck's and Grethlein's ideas, and the differences of the frameworks themselves, there is a common interest in how temporality is intertwined with human activity. Therefore, I argue that *future present* and *present future* as conceptualisations of time produced by and tested in historical narratives can also inform, enrich, and illuminate similar explorations in dramatic narratives. In this context, *future present* and *present future* operate as conceptualisations not only of a future known and anticipated or unknown and unexpected, but also of a future experienced in the dramatic present by readers and spectators alongside the characters. Such discussions, which consider the *Oresteia* as a work preoccupied with ideas pertinent to the area of philosophy of time, have not been the focus of the relevant scholarship. Even Simon Goldhill, who acknowledges that the *Oresteia* dramatises the problematic relation between the present and the future ('a relation that structures the narrative of the *Oresteia* importantly'[10]), does not tease out the broader implications of his analysis. In what follows, I show how the concepts of *future present* and *present future* can open up a number of interpretative possibilities for the four plays of the tetralogy. In the *Agamemnon*, a close reading is undertaken of four characters, the Watchman, Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Cassandra, and how they experience their *future present,* a future outside their control. I then move to Apollo's oracle and Clytemnestra's dream in the *Libation Bearers* to show how they help Orestes imagine a future for himself. In the *Eumenides* we encounter how the *present future* persists as the future that will be decided in a courtroom under the threat of an upcoming major crisis. After Orestes' acquittal and departure (777), we also revisit the concept of the *future present* not as a fixed reality but as an eternal futurity. In the last play of the tetralogy, the transformations of Proteus and the return home of Menelaus can be used to reflect on how *present future* meets the *future present.*

[10] Goldhill (1984b).

4.2. The *future present* in the *Agamemnon*

In the *Agamemnon*, the *future present* manifests itself as the collision and the convergence between the desire for a fixed future and the uncertainties of a lived present. More specifically, *telos* is not identified with the characters' expectations to control the future and with the prospect of the fulfilment of those expectations in the future; it is a lived, present condition which the characters and the readers and the spectators experience in unexpected and intense ways. For this quality of the future I use the term *presentness*.[11]

4.2.1. The Watchman

In the prologue (1–39), the Watchman's *future present* is dramatised through the fulfilment of his *telos* at the present. As the guard on duty, the watchman looks forward to the beacon light, the signal of the sack of Troy. The very first line of the *Agamemnon* articulates the Watchman's preoccupation with an optative future. With the performative utterance 'I ask' (αἰτῶ[12]), he prays to the gods with the request for 'release' from his present misery, the never-ending and tedious anticipation of the beacon light (ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων, 1). The prayer is accompanied by a detailed description of his cognitive and emotional state. His night-watching duty brings him 'misery' (1), 'fear' (14), and weeping 'lament' (18). This tension urges him to recapitulate his plea in the next couplet. It starts with the adverb of time 'now' (νῦν, 20) and includes an optative wish reiterating the goal of the prayer, echoing the very first line of the prologue: 'Now I wish (γένοιτ') for a happy release (ἀπαλλαγὴ) from misery | when the fire in the dark has appeared with its good news' (20–21). What follows is the unexpected realisation of his much-desired future. At the moment when he finishes his lines, the beacon light finally arrives and becomes visible to him. The Watchman welcomes its advent with warm enthusiasm and relief: 'Greetings to you!' (22). The enactment of the Watchman's *telos* as goal, which is the appearance of the beacon light in the first half of the prologue (1–21), is identified with the enactment of his *telos* as fulfilment and as end of his performance in the second half (22–39).

[11] We will revisit the concept of *future present* under the section 4.3.2. 'Apollo's oracle', where, instead of the *presentness* of the future, I argue that we see the *presence* of the future. For the concepts of *presentness* and *presence* within art criticism and art history, see Fried (1998) 148–72, originally published in 1967.

[12] On performative language in the *Oresteia*, see Fletcher (2011) 35–69.

The Watchman experiences his *future present* in a way that minimises the distance between the narrative and those who witness the scene. As the beacon light arrives at the end of his prayer (20–21), the desired future has turned into a present fact. In Aristotelian terms, the beginning of the play (ἀρχή) concurs with a *telos* (τέλος) as the end and fulfilment both of the Watchman's duty and of sack of Troy. More specifically, the Watchman's duty reaches a sudden *end* that marks his joyous departure from the narrative at the exact moment that the hope for the fall of Troy is *fulfilled*. Thus, one can argue that the Aeschylean tetralogy commences with a micro-narrative and employs a happy micro-ending which is in sharp contrast with the painful *future presents* to follow.

Moreover, as seen above, the readers of the historical narratives are positioned at the vantage point of knowing the events, what Grethlein defines as the *telos* of the observer's vantage point, whereas the historical characters are subject to the eventfulness of the future.[13] However, the readers and the spectators of the dramatic narrative experience the advent of the future in similar terms with the dramatic characters. What is striking in this scene is that their *telos* must be considered as less advantageous than the Watchman's. Bassi has argued for the non-privileged position of the reader in this scene on the grounds that 'the 'watching' is the sign of the absent visual experience and as such, 'does not put the reading subject in a position of power, but rather,…in the grip of 'panic and euphoria''.[14] I would add that, although the Watchman has no other audience, his *telos* is not identified, aligned, and synchronised with the *telos* of the narrative. What comes as a personal *fulfilment* for the Watchman operates as only the *beginning* for the readers and spectators, whose expectations about the future narrative open up at this exact point. The prologue concludes with a desire for resolution, a 'redemptive conclusion',[15] and a sense of a deterministic *closed future* which, if anything, does not prepare at all for the painful *future present* that Agamemnon and Cassandra will experience.

[13] See p. 82 and n. 9.

[14] Bassi (2005) 262, citing Mitchell (2005) 348.

[15] Fletcher (2011) 35.

The Watchman's narrative constitutes a unique case of a minor, anonymous character who acts upon the reader's and the spectator's engagement with the development of the plot.[16] According to Mieke Bal, classical tragedy illustrates how crisis is narrativised.[17] In narrative, crisis operates within a restricted temporal span. The dramatic narrative is able to tackle this restriction. One way in doing so is through the participation of a minor character, who, as Bal argues, is the protagonist 'of his own fabula', creating a sub-fabula. I argue that the Watchman of the *Agamemnon* might operate as an example of this model. Another characteristic of classical tragedy which contributes to the extension of the temporal span of crisis is the references to past and future. These references are also in abundance in the Watchman's speech (2–7, 10–19, 22–35). Thus, drawing on Bal's model, the Watchman scene presents a model of crisis-form which transcends its temporal confines.

4.2.2. Agamemnon

The arrival of the beacon light is followed by Agamemnon's return to his homeland, Argos, where another dramatisation of the *future present* takes place. As was illustrated previously in Chapter 2, Agamemnon's scene is strongly preoccupied with the ideas of *telos* as completion and end. Here, Agamemnon's *telos* must be understood as the interaction between his present and his future. While his present is dramatised onstage with him before Clytemnestra, the Chorus, and the readers/spectators, his future is dramatised *also* in the present *but* offstage and is witnessed by Clytemnestra and Cassandra (on which more see below). Like the Watchman, Agamemnon is a character who encounters his *telos* as a present experience and not simply as an expectation for the future, as a fact in the present rather than as a possibility for the future. His homecoming to Argos marks a violent *telos* very different from the one anticipated. Following a long introduction by the Chorus (782–809), Agamemnon appears onstage and stays for less than 200 lines (781–957), with his speaking part confined to less than 100 lines (810–54, 914–57). His brief role is in contrast with the intensity with which he experiences his *future present*.

[16] For the significance of the Watchman as an anonymous character, see Fraenkel (1950, II) 25–26. For further bibliography, see Yoon (2012) 41 n. 7. None of these works, however, comment on the Watchman's contribution to the development of the plot not only for the *Agamemnon* but also for the *Oresteia* as a whole.

[17] Bal (1997) 178. See also Liveley (2008, 90) on her discussion of time and narrative in Ovid's *Heroides*.

For their part, the spectators and the readers are invited to reflect upon Agamemnon's future in a twofold way. One is aligned with the way the Chorus deals with the future. The other forces them to contemplate on the narrative from an outside vantage point. The Chorus advises Agamemnon that the passing of time will be beneficial for him: 'You will perceive and know with time (γνώσῃ δὲ χρόνῳ διαπευθόμενος) | which of your citizens staying at home | acted rightfully and which improperly' (807–9). This generalised advice refers to a distant future that blatantly contradicts any knowledge of the myth (including its treatment by Aeschylus), according to which Agamemnon will be murdered by Clytemnestra and will have no opportunity to shape his own future.

4.2.3. Clytemnestra

Another example of *future present* in the *Agamemnon* is offered by Clytemnestra who, like the Watchman, experiences her *future present* with the sense of *telos* as fulfilment, without the disastrous implications of Agamemnon's and Cassandra's *telos* (on which more below). Clytemnestra's *telos* comes across as celebratory, because, as in the case of the Watchman, the much desired and anticipated goal of taking her revenge on Agamemnon becomes suddenly actualised. As seen in Chapter 2, Agamemnon is τέλειος (972) for Clytemnestra, meaning both the man in authority and the perfect victim in ritual terms.[18] What materialises the Watchman's *future present*, Agamemnon's return, also prepares for Clytemnestra's *future present*, Agamemnon's murder, which is, of course, also Agamemnon's *future present*. Her invocation to Zeus with the request to fulfil her prayer (973–74), which was at the time of uttering a desirable future, subsequently becomes a desirable present, and her *telos* as fulfilment is exacted through Agamemnon's *telos* as end (1343, 1345). Thus, through these interchanging temporalities described with the term *future present*, the readers and the spectators are invited to revisit Clytemnestra's actions both as future and as present, both as in anticipation of a future and as witnesses of a present unfolding.

[18] See section 2.2.

4.2.4. Cassandra

A final example of how the concept of *future present* can be employed in the *Agamemnon* takes place in the 'Cassandra scene' (1035–330), where a striking type of *prolepsis* features.[19] While in conventional narrative prolepsis future is *anticipated* at the present, Cassandra's future is *lived* at the present as her *future present* in the most agonising way, whereas the actualisation of her prophecies is still being anticipated and not happening until line 1343. Cassandra's time travels offer the opportunity to the readers and the spectators to traverse time back and forth with her, and this is how Cassandra's *future present* differentiates itself from Koselleck's and Grethlein's *future(s) past*.

Cassandra accesses the future in ways that go beyond conventional understandings of the term prophet and seer.[20] Strictly speaking, the word 'prophet', προφήτης, derives from the compound πρὸ+φημὶ/λέγω for the 'one who speaks for a god and interprets his will to man'.[21] The preposition πρό indicates knowledge of the future events before they happen.[22] The prophet's direct access of the future is stressed by Arthur Danto who notes:

> The prophet is one who speaks about the future in a manner which is appropriate only to the past, or who speaks of the present in the light of a future treated as a *fait accompli*. A prophet treats the present in a perspective ordinarily available only to future historians to whom present events are past, and for who, the meaning of present events is discernible.[23]

In Danto's terms, Cassandra acts as a future historian. However, Danto's definition of the prophet corresponds only partially to Cassandra's involvement. Cassandra speaks about the future as something happening at the present and from which she cannot escape, with a level

[19] On *prolepsis* (and *analepsis*), see Genette (1980) 67–85, 48–67, respectively. Chapter 5 below discusses proleptic narratives in more detail. For the seers in ancient Greece, see Flower & Allmon (2008).

[20] On the meanings of προφήτης and μάντις (including bibliography), see Pillinger (2019) 9–12; Rehm (2005) 345 and n. 10; Nagy (1990).

[21] *LSJ*[9] s.v. προφήτης.

[22] Fraenkel (1950, III) on 1099: 'προφήτης does primarily denote one who 'prophesies', i.e. foretells future events. The word, akin to προειπεῖν…, means literally 'pronouncer'… It is not synonymous with μάντις.'

[23] Danto (1968) 9.

of certainty suitable only to statements about past events. As Cassandra is an eyewitness of the future herself, she also acts *unlike* a future historian, because she does not only *speak about* the future but *lives in* the future, not with the privilege of advance knowledge, but at her own personal cost.

Cassandra's role is also different from conventional understandings of the term 'seer'. The English noun 'seer' derives from the verb 'to see' and means 'someone who has clear vision', similar to the French 'clairvoyant'.[24] Both seer and clairvoyant are relate to the Greek μάντις. Unlike other prophetic figures such as Teiresias (in Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King*)[25] and Polymestor (in Euripides' *Hecuba*) who are unable to see (Teiresias is blind and Polymestor cannot see when it comes to predict the future),[26] Cassandra actually sees the future and the past and describes in speech what she sees, revealing the horror of her vision. For example, she can see the blood on the floor of the house ('a floor sprinkled with blood!', 1092), a net as the murderer's weapon ('Is it some catch-net of Death? | No, the trap-net sharing his bed, sharing guilt | for his blood', 1115–7), the murder scene (1125–29), and Thyestes' murdered children (1217–22). However, the terms 'seer' and 'clairvoyant' are not sufficient for her. What completes Cassandra's unique performance is the multisensorial type of experience through *synaesthesia*.[27] She is not only a clairvoyant able to *see* what others cannot; she can also activate and mobilise other senses to access knowledge of the past and future. She can *hear* from the past Thyestes' children crying ('these are infants weeping for their slaughter, | and over their roasted flesh which their father devoured', 1096–97) and from the future the Erinyes singing ('This house will never be abandoned by a choir of voices in unison, | unlovely in tone because it does not tell of good', 1186–87). She can also *smell* the evil, the blood and its origins ('The stranger has a keen nose it seems, like a hound, | she is searching for blood and will discover whose murder it was, 1093–94; 'I track closely on the scent | of evil done long ago', 1184–85; 'The vapour is just like that from a tomb; it's so evident!', 1311).[28]

[24] Rehm (2005, 347–48 and n. 16) notes that 'clear vision' is not literal, as it has to do with the clearance of mind.

[25] Pillinger (2019) 13–14.

[26] Rehm (2005) 347.

[27] On the broader implications of the term *synaesthesia*, see Butler & Purves (2013).

[28] Mazzoldi (2002) 147 and n. 7.

The intensity with which the future is lived by Cassandra as present becomes evident by her use of interjections and inarticulate language as well. Although Agamemnon and Cassandra enter the stage together, her presence remains unannounced and unexplained, being thrown into invisibility, immobility and silence.[29] Agamemnon is the first character who refers to the Trojan princess as 'woman stranger' (950), 170 lines after their appearance on stage. First, Cassandra remains in the carriage speechless and motionless, and, then, finally descends from the carriage following Clytemnestra. However, she suddenly stops and utters her very first words in the play, an invocation to Apollo which she soon repeats (1072–73, 1076–77):[30] 'Ototototoi, popoi, dah! | Apollo! Apollo!' (ὀτοτοτοτοῖ ποποῖ δᾶ· | ὦπολλον ὦπολλον).[31] This cry, 'a formulaic cry of grief and terror',[32] between articulate and inarticulate,[33] expresses her agony and marks the starting point of her unlimited access to different temporal spheres.[34]

Cassandra's continuous callings to Apollo (1080–82, 1085–87) demonstrate the awakening of her prophetic skill. As seen before, Agamemnon has been able to experience only part of his own *future* present, and in a restricted timeframe: his return to Argos, once a future, becomes a present. However, in the case of Cassandra, the details about Agamemnon's death are revealed gradually, and upon each revelation Cassandra responds with an interjection which illustrates the vehemence of the future events: 'Ió, popoi!' (ἰὼ ποποῖ, 1100–4); 'Ió' (ἰώ, 1107–11); 'Ah, ah! Papai, papai!' (ἔ ἔ παπαῖ παπαῖ, 1114–17); 'Oh, oh! See, see!' (ἆ ἆ ἰδοὺ ἰδού, 1125–29). Not only is she the victim of Apollo's punishment of not being believed by her listeners, but also, she is a unique type of a prophetess who is wholly and fiercely involved in the prophesied future. What follows represents the most powerful experience for a living person, the disclosure of the details about their own death. In four sets of lines, 'Ió ió',

[29] For the staging of 'the Cassandra scene', see Taplin (1977) 305–6, 317–22. On silence in this scene, see Pillinger (2019) 31.

[30] Knox (1972, 109) notes that Aeschylus activates his new 'third actor technique' only for the character of Cassandra.

[31] Here I cite Sommerstein's translation (2008) instead of Collard's (2002): 'O-o-o-oh! Horror! No! O Apollo, O Apollo!'. For a discussion of Cassandra's cry and its English translation, see Prins (2005), who focuses on Virginia Woolf's interest in learning Greek through Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and her (and other Victorian writers' and translators') decision not to render Cassandra's cry into English.

[32] Knox (1972) 111.

[33] Brault (2009) 205.

[34] Mazzoldi (2002) 146 and n. 6.

(ἰὼ ἰώ, 1136–39), 'Ió ió' (ἰὼ ἰώ, 1146–49), 'Ió' (ἰώ, 1156–61), 'Ió' (ἰώ, 1167–72), Cassandra realises that her *telos* is imminent: she will be murdered as soon as she enters the palace. Cassandra experiences violent encounters with the future on two more occasions (1214–55, 1256–94), again marked by interjections which initiate two long narratives about Agamemnon's and her own death: 'Iou, iou! Oh! Oh! The pain!' (ἰοὺ ἰού, ὦ ὦ κακά, 1214) and 'Papai! How the fire comes upon me! Ototoi!' (παπαῖ· οἷον τὸ πῦρ ἐπέρχεται· ὀτοτοῖ, 1256).[35]

The uniqueness of Cassandra's prophetic skill, which lies in the instant dramatisation of the prophecy in front of her own eyes, has been discussed by Pascale-Anne Brault and Emily Pillinger. Brault, drawing on David Aune's work in religious studies, employs the concept of *futuristic present*.[36] Brault turns the use of *futuristic present* from a morphological expression to a temporal zone which illustrates the simultaneity of present and future events. As Cassandra is foreshadowing future events, she communicates the information in present tense: 'she strikes', 'he falls' (τύπτει, πίτνει, 1128). Instead of foretelling the future (i.e. 'Clytemnestra will strike' and 'Agamemnon will fall'), Cassandra describes as fulfilled future actions which have not yet been committed.[37] In her discussion of the 'Cassandra-scene', Pillinger reintroduces the term 'realisation' which has been suggested by several scholars as a way to conceptualise prophetic communication.[38] According to this concept of 'realisation', the boundaries between the articulation of the prophecy and its ultimate materialisation become fluid. The articulation of the prophecy is not just the mere description of future events, but it is also their interpretation. This might trigger 'speculations, assumptions, reconsiderations and actions'; thus, the prophecy 'turns out to be 'realised' through the very act of its interpretation'.[39] Brault's and Pillinger's terminology can be helpful for thinking about Cassandra's relation to the future but needs to be developed further if ones wants to do

[35] Sommerstein's translation (2008), see Chapter 4, n. 30. On the symbolism of fire, see Pillinger (2019) 33.

[36] Brault (2009) 207–10, citing Aune (1983, 56). In his taxonomy of prophecy, Aune introduces *futuristic present* as a tense of the indicative, representative of the category of 'predictive oracles', under which Cassandra's oracular speech is filed.

[37] This can be related to the term 'future present' which Abbott (2005, 534) uses as 'an exact analogue of the 'historical present' (the rendering of past action in the present tense).

[38] Pillinger (2019) 7 and n. 16 for bibliography.

[39] Pillinger (2019) 7.

justice to Cassandra's *experience* of the future, its dynamics, range and interplay with the readers and the spectators. Those issues are further explored in the chapters that follow.[40]

Cassandra's time travels include not only the view of her own death and Agamemnon's but extend well beyond the limits of the dramatic future and past of the play. First, the prophetess exposes the background of her personal story and involvement with Apollo who gave her his divine skill but took from her the power to warn her recipients, or even more, to save herself from death (1082, 1202–13, 1263–78). She also sees the invisible Furies, the chorus of the *Eumenides*, who are the eternal occupants, 'embedded' in the house of Atreides.[41] Cassandra reveals the Furies' past, present, and future omnipresence (1186–93) which ranges from the killing of the children of Thyestes (1217–22),[42] to the advent of Orestes as the matricide (1280–84, 1324–25) and to the unknown future of the end of the *Eumenides*.[43] Cassandra' insight encompasses the past, the present, and the future history of the Atreides' family, from the very beginning to its uncertain end.

It is this exact temporal dynamic of the 'Cassandra scene', the fusion of past, present, and future, which brings the readers and spectators closer to the characters. The readers and spectators are invited to comprehend Cassandra's agony in its full scale and wider context. The fact that Cassandra is alienated from the other dramatic characters (as the only character in extant tragedy who prophesies to people with whom she is unfamiliar) does not only eliminate the distance between her and the spectators and readers, but 'can make her even more sympathetic to the audience'.[44] Not only the original audience but anyone engaging the narrative is offered the chance to watch a dramatic persona encountering the moment of her death. The distinctiveness of the tragic narrative, the absence of a narrator as mediator, aligns the time taken to narrate with the time narrated and effectively invites anyone engaging with the narrative to experience time and to anticipate the future alongside Cassandra, despite their

[40] For Cassandra's prophecies as *foreshadowing* technique, see Chapter 5 (under 5.3.1) For the *suspenseful* and *surprising* elements of 'the Cassandra scene', see Chapters 6 (under 6.3.1, 6.4.2, and 6.4.3) and 7 (under 7.3.3 and 7.4.2) respectively.

[41] The term 'embedded' is used by Pillinger (2019, 61 and n. 78), citing Padel (1992, 181) who argues for 'the development of the Furies through the *Oresteia*'.

[42] For this type of temporal experience which exceeds the temporal boundaries of the narrative towards the past, see Grethlein's & Krebs' study on 'plupast', a term which conceptualises past events prior to their narrative's proper past, a past embedded in the past (2012).

[43] See in Chapter 3, section 3.5 ('Closure as possibility in the *Eumenides*').

[44] Rehm (2005) 347.

spatial and temporal separation, bringing spectators and readers into contact with something *beyond* their normal experience.[45] Cassandra offers for them to see through her what for others will remain inaccessible and unintelligible: she becomes the medium through which the fusion of the fictional and the real world breaks down the limits between expectation and experience. Although they are aware of the irreversibility of the events that follow due to their prior familiarity with the myth or expectations about the genre, any certainty and security give their place to an opportunity to reflect on what it is like to experience time in tragedy.

Cassandra's *telos* through her experience of the *future present* needs to be understood as both comparable to, and very different from the *telos* of Grethlein's historian. In historiography, as Grethlein argues, the concept of *telos* is associated with the vantage point of the historian, whereas the *future past* expresses the temporal asymmetries between historians and historical characters, which offers the former ones the hindsight to interpret historical facts. In the case of Cassandra, her *telos* emerges out of her 'vantage' point of remembering, knowing, understanding, forefeeling and seeing the truth beyond temporal limits and constraints. This ability of handling and controlling knowledge is reminiscent of Grethlein's historian. However, *unlike* Grethlein's historian, the paradox of Cassandra's vantage point is that it comes with a realisation of the limited power of her own skill (1260–8). Cassandra also operates *like* Grethlein's historical characters: the kind of knowledge Cassandra possesses is not sufficient to help her navigate and escape her narrative future. She revisits a past of violent memories and she is transported into a future which is unwanted but inevitable. Therefore, by contrast to the *telos* which is presented in a celebratory manner in historiography, in the *Agamemnon* the knowledge gained by the characters comes at a very high personal cost that outweighs any benefit and undermines any sense of control.

In the *Agamemnon*, *telos* is not a privileged vantage point from which to look at the past or to create certainties about the future. Rather it is a set of intense bodily and mental experiences crystallised as the *future present*. Those experiences are shared between individual characters and external spectators and readers who experience each *future present* with a different degree of intensity building up to a powerful climax: from the Watchman's and

[45] Easterling (2005) 29.

Clytemnestra's redemptive experience of the future to Agamemnon and Cassandra's painful one.

4.3. The *present future* in the *Libation Bearers*

Here I move from the *future present* to the *present future* as another conceptualisation of a future understood and experienced in the dramatic present by the characters alongside the readers and the spectators. By contrast to the *future present*, where a pre-decided and fixed future is seen and experienced in the present, the *present future* is associated with the future as 'imagined, planned, projected, and produced' in and *for* the present.[46] The narrative of the *Libation Bearers* employs the *present future* as a future being constructed at the present, and subsequently, an open future which departs from the determinism of the *future present* experienced in the *Agamemnon*. This concept is explored through two micro-narratives, Clytemnestra's dream and Apollo's oracle which, despite their default closed future associations, determine the matricide in a way that manifests Orestes' and Clytemnestra's futures as open fields with possibilities awaiting to be fulfilled. Although the type of future related to divination is the *future present* and not the *present future* (as we saw in the case of Cassandra), the employment of the dream and the oracle invites the readers and spectators to explore how a tragic narrative can accommodate contingency and openness, even when it employs conventional modes of storytelling.

4.3.1. Clytemnestra's dream

The employment of Clytemnestra's dream in the narrative of the *Libation Bearers* invites the readers and spectators to engage with Clytemnestra's future as possible and not yet fixed.[47] The narrative of Clytemnestra's dream consists of three fragmentary micronarratives, two by the Chorus (23–41, 523–39) and one by Orestes (540–50), and offers an idea of the future that can be imagined and, thus, altered. Although Clytemnestra's dream is expected to depict a

[46] Adam & Groves (2007) 28. See section 4.1.

[47] For a different interpretation of Clytemnestra's dream which, nevertheless, emphasises the guilt-driven nature rather than the prophetic, see Devereux (1976) 180–218.

future present because of its teleological implications, it is actually employed as an aspect of Clytemnestra's and Orestes' *present future*.

Following the two narratives of the dream by the Chorus (23–41, 523–39), Orestes is looking for clues that would empower him to plan and then execute the murder. The last lines of his dream interpretation manifest how Orestes himself constructs his *future* at the *present*: 'I have been made into the snake and am | to kill (κτείνω) her, as this dream tells' (549–50). The use of the present tense κτείνω has sometimes been interpreted as 'prophetic present tense'[48] or as 'timeless present'.[49] What is important for the purposes of this discussion, however, is that through this 'prophetic present tense' and 'timeless present' it is Orestes himself who authorises his own killing of Clytemnestra. He is also publicly accepted and celebrated by the Chorus as τερασκόπος, as a diviner: 'I choose your interpretation of this portent' (551). Thus, this interpretation of the dream involves Orestes himself as τελεσφόρος (541) and constructs a causal relation with the matricide. Clytemnestra too argues for a causal relation between the dream and her death, as her end is approaching (928–29). However, as we saw in Chapter 3 (section 3.4), and although Orestes acts as a *telos bearer* (τελεσφόρον, 541), the matricide in the *Libation Bearers* cannot be identified with τέλος as fulfilment and end. It provides not continuity and closure, but discontinuity. As Adam and Groves note for the *present future*, '[w]hatever it will contain, we feel that it is subordinate to what happens here in the present,'[50] and this is certainly case for Orestes and for Clytemnestra.

Although the snake of the dream is not explicitly identified with a human agent, and there is no direct reference to Orestes, the maternal relationship between Clytemnestra and the snake leaves no room for alternative readings. By putting Orestes in the position of the snake, the tragic narrative invites readers and spectators to look at Clytemnestra's future and to anticipate the act of matricide. This treatment of the dream-narrative deviates significantly from its predecessor, Stesichorus' *Oresteia*, where Agamemnon is the snake-agent visiting from the past.[51] While in Stesichorus' *Oresteia* any presence of Orestes would epitomise the

[48] Collard (2002) on 550.

[49] Garvie (1986) on 550.

[50] Adam & Groves (2007) 122.

[51] *PMG* 219=fr. 180 Davies & Finglass. Garvie (1986, xx) argues that both lines of the fragment refer to Agamemnon, while Finglass (2018, 32) argues that βασιλεύς of the second line refers to Orestes. For a discussion of the differences between Stesichorus' and Aeschylus' treatments, see Swift (2015).

continuity of the line and the perpetuation of the revenge cycle, in the *Libation Bearers* it is associated with a crime which comes across as abhorrent and, therefore, discontinued. As Garvie argues, Aeschylus' innovation lies in the fact that 'he involved the personal decision and responsibility of each person who came under it (family curse)'.[52] This is how the *present future* is put in a tragic light.

4.3.2. Apollo's oracle

A second example for the concept of the *present future* in the *Libation Bearers* can be found in the case of Apollo's oracle. The narrative of the oracle appears four times in the play, three times by Orestes (269–96, 557–59, 1029–33) and once by Pylades (900–2). As with Clytemnestra's dream, the deployment of the narrative of Apollo's oracle dramatises another example of a future planned, designed, and executed in the present.[53] By contrast to the default perception of the oracular speech as deterministic, Apollo's oracle as a both final and causal power towards the matricide.[54]

In the first reference to the oracle in the *Libation Bearers*, Orestes communicates its content to Electra and the Chorus without however quoting it word for word (269–96). According to Orestes, 'Loxias' great and powerful oracle' which orders him 'to go through this danger' will not betray him (269–70). As he explains, Apollo 'loud and often' warned Orestes of many troubles in case of failing to kill the murderers of his father (271–74). The troubles of which Apollo warned Orestes involve the immediate danger of losing his life. What follows is a detailed description of the Furies' function as avengers of the dead (278–90). What transforms the oracle from a prophetic device which determines the future to a demonstration of Orestes' own *present future* is, first, the absence of the verbatim repetition of the divine speech as the authority and the guarantor of the oracle, and, second, Orestes' doubting the validity of the oracle: 'Are not such oracles to be trusted? | Even if I do not trust them, the deed has to be done' (297–98). Despite, or perhaps, because of the shadow that these issues cast on the prophetic power of Apollo's oracle, in the following lines, Orestes exposes

[52] Garvie (1986) xxv–vi and n. 52; Davies (1969) 260.

[53] On the issue of oracles and decision-making in antiquity, see Eidinow (2007) 11–24.

[54] The employment of the narrative of Apollo's oracle is also discussed in the next Chapter (section under 5.3.1) in the context of *foreshadowing* techniques.

the reasons which add up to the oracle urging him to commit the murders: grief for his father, and the deprivation of both his property and his kingship in Argos (299–301).

In the second reference to the oracle, Orestes addresses the Chorus in front of Electra and asks for their cooperation, deploying two strategically important claims: first, that Apollo ordered this double murder, and, second, that Apollo has never made an error in the past (557–59). This attitude is a strong manifestation that Orestes sees his future as *present future*, because he is fully aware that the successful completion of his plan requires the persuasion and synergy of the Chorus. Orestes' future actions are heavily defined by his present and not by any already determined future that awaits him.

The third reference to the oracle is made by Pylades, just before Orestes and himself force Clytemnestra inside the palace to commit the matricide. At the sight of his mother's gestures of motherhood, Orestes seems to abandon the rhetoric of a deterministic future shaped by the oracle. It is at this particular point when Pylades reminds him of the presumably binding nature of the oracle, once again demonstrating how a prophetic oracle becomes part of a rhetorical strategy: 'Then where's the future for Loxias' oracles, delivered | by the Pythia, and the pledges sworn on oath? Think of | all men as your enemies rather than the gods!' (900–2). The fact that Orestes is having doubts about the matricide brings out clearly the fact that the matricide is a human plan rather than a divine order, and makes it necessary for Pylades to use the oracle as a tool for their plan to materialise.[55]

The final reference to Apollo's oracle in the *Libation Bearers* comes after the matricide (1029–33). In these lines, Orestes looks back at the point when the matricide was still a future and argues once again that it was god-driven. More specifically, Orestes explicitly attributes the matricide to Apollo on the grounds that this oracle determined Orestes' future. According to Orestes, the oracle promised, on the one hand, that committing the matricide would leave him unpolluted, and on the other hand, that in the case of failure he would be punished. However, he also adds other reasons that led him to this deed: it was a just deed, because his mother is *miasma* and hated by the gods ('it was not without justice | that I killed my mother, the pollution who killed my father | and an abomination to the gods', 1027–29).

[55] This scene is also discussed in the following sections: 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 with regard to Apollo's oracle and the oath (which Pylades is referring to) respectively as *foreshadowing* techniques; 5.4.1 with regard to Orestes' hesitation as a *nodal point*; 6.4.3 for its *suspenseful* element; 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 for its *surprising* element.

What this final reference to the oracle suggests is that Orestes' ability to shape the future through claims in the present continues until quite late in the play. It is only with the appearance of the Furies (whether or not they are visible to the spectators) after the matricide that this ability comes to an end. Whereas from the beginning of the play Orestes uses the oracle to move away from a future he cannot control, the arrival of the Furies marks a forceful transition from a *present future* to a *future present* reminiscent of Cassandra.

In the lines 1010–76 (the end of the play), what Orestes experiences reveals a different attitude towards the future. Although Orestes claimed earlier that he had no option but to kill Clytemnestra, he now faces what it is to have no option, which is evidently demonstrated in the line 1062: 'I'm being driven, I tell you; I can't stay here longer!' (also 1050: 'I can't stay here longer!'). This scene illustrates Orestes' transition from his *present future* to an instant *future present*, unlike Clytemnestra's in the *Agamemnon*. He reaches a moment of enlightenment seeing his own future clearly after the deed, while Clytemnestra's such opportunity is overridden by Aegisthus' appearance. As Taplin comments, Orestes now has 'more foresight and more insight'.[56]

Orestes, then, deploys the devices of the dream and the oracle and manipulates their narratives in order to build a causal association between them and his future actions, and mainly, the matricide. However, this future which Orestes presents as his own and which he claims to be determined by superhuman forces can be seen as a future in the making, a future being constructed by human actions and desires, as the play progresses. Whereas in the *Agamemnon*, the Watchman, Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, and Cassandra experience their future in the form of a *future present*, with the future invading into the present, in the *Libation Bearers*, Orestes, through Clytemnestra's dream and Apollo's oracle, implements his own *telos* as goal and Clytemnestra's *telos* as an end.

4.4. The *present future* and *future present* in the *Eumenides*

In the *Eumenides* the discussion around *telos* and the two terms, *present future* and *future present*, involves a more systematic dialogue between the play and the contemporary

[56] Taplin (1977) 359.

discourse of philosophy of time. The play dramatises a ground-breaking change in the way in which people, both as individuals and collectively, will never look at the future again in the same way they did in the past. Concentrating on the scene of Orestes' trial and its aftermath, I will explore this in relation to Orestes and the Furies, and in terms of how it encompasses the readers and the spectators. In doing so, I draw on modern discussions in philosophy of ancient and modern history and in literary criticism, where the matter of the future as seen and experienced both by agents and recipients of the narrative is central.

4.4.1. A new *present future*

The establishment of the Areopagus brings about the transition to a *present future* which is no longer ordained by the laws of revenge and the imposition of supernatural forces as seen in the previous two plays. In that sense, the idea of the *present future* as the future that is 'pictured, planned, projected, pursued, and performed in the present'[57] does not repeat what we have seen in the *Libation Bearers*, but departs from it especially in the scene of the trial (470–753). Specifically, two groups of lines demonstrate how the idea of the *present future* is dramatised in the plot: the first set refers to Athena's announcement of the establishment of the Areopagus council (470–89), and the second set refers to the voting and to Orestes' acquittal (681–753). From the establishment of the Areopagus to the announcement of Orestes' acquittal, the future is seen as constructed out of several presents.

The first expression of the *present future* in the *Eumenides* takes place when Athena announces the establishment of the Areopagus' council (482–85).[58] The first hearing of the case by Athena (397–469), following her appearance on stage, does not lead to a final decision, as requested by both parties (433, 468–69). The reason for that is that, whatever the outcome, one of the two parties would be outraged. As Athena explains, on the one hand, Orestes requests for his right as a suppliant to be listened to and exonerated (473–74), and on the other hand, the Furies' 'allotted role' (μοῖραν, 476) demands fulfilment, otherwise an 'intolerable

[57] Adam & Groves (2007) 32.

[58] On the prehistory and history of the Areopagus' council, see Henrichs (1994).

everlasting sickness' will fall over Athens (αἰανής νόσος, 479).[59] Thus, Athena, under the fear of causing the downfall of the city, decides to bring about a pivotal change in how the decision of a murder charge or acquittal will be made. From now on, this responsibility is devolved to the council members of the Areopagus council. According to this newly founded system, the members of the council, made up by the best citizens of Athens (487), will act as judges (δικαστάς, 484). The process of judging a murder case will also include the examination of witnesses and evidence (μαρτύριά τε καὶ τεκμήρια, 485). As soon as Athena finds the citizens chosen to act as jurors (presumably they appear on stage in line 566),[60] the council commences its workings with the completion of the voting process (674–75, 708–10). From now on, one's future will hinge upon the judgement of the Areopagus council which constitutes a powerful demonstration of the *present future* marking a watershed in the making of Athenian history.

The second manifestation of the *present future* in the *Eumenides* takes place in the trial scene itself, where Orestes and the Furies present their cases and perform their roles in order to prevail (566–751). What will define their future status is this exact performance during the trial, while their engagement with the past fades away. Both parties try to make a strong case for themselves. On the one hand Orestes, and especially, Apollo argue for the matricide as a result of Orestes' revenge for the murder of his father. On the other hand, the Furies argue for their ancient privilege to punish the ones who commit interfamilial murder. In the case of Orestes, it is the first time that Apollo explicitly takes on responsibility for the matricide: 'I am responsible | for the killing of his mother. You must bring | this case to trial and determine it with the best knowledge you have' (579–81). The Furies expose their case through a stichomythia with Orestes and focus on the grounds the matricide was executed (585–608), while Orestes turns again to Apollo who seeks to create a new context for the debate. Apollo deploys a series of rhetorical strategies. First, he presents Zeus as the omnipotent one who ordered Clytemnestra's murder (614–21, 644–51), second, he argues for the natural superiority of fatherhood (Agamemnon) against motherhood (Clytemnestra) using the two examples of

[59] This phrase also appears when the Furies revoke their curses after their agreement to act as the Awesome Ones: 'and may no persistent disease invade, destroying the crops' (μηδ᾽ ἄκαρπος αἰα- | νὴς ἐφερπέτω νόσος, 942). The adjective αἰανής appears three more times in the *Eumenides*: 'We are Night's eternal children' (Νυκτὸς αἰανῆ τέκνα, 416), 'for all time' (εἰς τὸν αἰανῆ χρόνον, 572), 'to eternity' (αἰανῶς, 672).

[60] On the number of the judges, see Sommerstein (2008) 425; Collard (2002) on 711–33, 735.

Athena and of himself (625–39, 657–66). Finally, at the end of his defence, Apollo draws everybody's attention, including Athena's, to the future both near and distant (667–73):

> Pallas, I shall make (τεύξω) your city and your | people great in other ways, as I know how, but above all I have | sent Orestes here as suppliant at your temple's hearth to | pledge loyalty for all time (εἰς τό πᾶν χρόνου), and for you to gain him, as your | ally, goddess, and those after him (τοὺς ἔπειτα); and in order that these | things should remain to eternity (αἰανῶς), for the Athenians' later | generations (τοὺς ἐπισπόρους) to honour the pledges sworn.[61]

As seen in the quote above, Apollo's instrumental shift of the focus from the past to the future is the direct result of the establishment of the Areopagus council, an unprecedented fact in the Athenian history.

In the final part of the trial scene, the voting of the judges and of Athena leads to Orestes' acquittal. After Athena's brief proclamation for the legitimacy and reliability of this legal institution in the future (681–708), the judges cast their votes into the urns (during the lines 711–33), followed by Athena who casts the final vote which is accompanied by her argument in support of Orestes (734–43). The future of Orestes and the Furies will soon materialise. While the votes are counted, both grasp the tension of the moment and wonder how their troubles will end (744–47):[62]

> ORESTES: Phoebus Apollo! How will the issue be decided?
> CHORUS: O Night, black mother! Are you seeing this?
> ORESTES: A noose is the end for me now, or to see the daylight!
> CHORUS: Yes, and for us it is extinction, or maintaining our prerogatives hereafter!

[61] On the use of adverbial phrases which point out to the extra-dramatic future, see under section 3.5. 'Closure as possibility in the *Eumenides*'.

[62] On these lines as manifestations of *nodal points*, see section 5.4.1.

Apollo highlights the moment by urging the jurors to be attentive while counting, because '[w]hen good judgement's | gone away, great harm happens; but if a single vote comes in, | it can set a house upright' (749–51). The announcement of the outcome comes as a confirmation of how the advent of the future is shaped by the experience of the present: Orestes is acquitted because the counting finds the votes equal.

As mentioned before, Koselleck's *future(s) past* conceptualises a major change in the experience of historic time with the advent of modernity in the late eighteenth century.[63] The term *future(s) past* demonstrates the tension between the past and the future and between experience and expectation respectively. Although before the advent of modernity the expectations were wholly defined by experiences which were spaced out, the acceleration of time in modernity leads to a disconnect between expectation and experience. What Koselleck argues for the advent of modernity with the French Revolution may be also applied to the moment of the Athenian history being dramatised in the *Eumenides*: 'the previously existing space of experience is not sufficient for the determination of the horizon of expectation.'[64] As in Koselleck, the introduction of the Areopagus court contracts the space of experience. Whereas in the past that space was determined by the law of revenge and occupied a long span of time (what we normally call the cycle of revenge) is now fused with the horizon of expectations which are and will be determined by the jurors' idea and sense of justice.

In this first part of the *Eumenides*, the future appears as wholly dependent on the present. The establishment of the Areopagus promises that it will obey the needs of the present, as the case of Orestes demonstrates. It is introduced as 'a future by action' in Kermode's words.[65] However, unlike the *present future* in the *Libation Bearers*, the framework of the dream and the oracle is replaced here by judgement of the best citizens and the goddess that protects the city.

[63] See section 3.5 above ('Closure as possibility in the *Eumenides*').

[64] Koselleck (2004) 263, 267.

[65] Kermode (1967) 88.

4.4.2. The *telos* as the end of the world

The idea of *present future* as seen above is not the only outcome of the new judicial system which Athena institutes. The transition from the old to the new triggers the Furies' reaction which is conceptualised with the word *telos*. *Telos* has been already examined as a lexical term which means 'completion', 'payment', 'ritual', and 'duty' (Chapter 2) and also as a lexical and narrative term meaning 'ending' (Chapter 3). Here, *telos* is employed as a concept with eschatological implications. I argue that the Furies experience the transition to the new through the certainty that the future will be catastrophic. Their experience of *telos* takes place in two phases: first, in the scene following the announcement of the institution of the Areopagus council (490–565), and, second, after Orestes' acquittal which needs to be seen as an example of the *present future* (754–915).

Just after Athena's announcement of the new judicial institution, the Furies' lyrical song interrupts and substitutes the experience of the *present future* as seen above with the idea of *telos* as the future which is identified with the end of the human world (490–565). Between *present future* (section 4.4.1 above) and *future present* (section 4.4.3 below), the Furies describe the existence of a future that threatens the survival of humanity. They start their song with the adverb 'Now' (νῦν) and a conditional of the real: 'Catastrophe now is coming | from new ordinances, if a justice | which is harm to justice shall prevail | for this man here, the matricide' (490–93). This catastrophe will also bring about a series of other disasters, expressed by the words 'suffering' (πάθεα, 497), 'rancour' (κότος, 501), 'κακά' (504), 'torment' (μόχθων, 505), which are associated with parents being assailed by their children 'in time hereafter' (μεταῦθις ἐν χρόνῳ, 498). As a result of the disruption of justice, the Furies will 'launch every death' on mortals (πάντ᾽ ἐφήσω μόρον, 502) who will be looking for an escape in vain (503–7). Employing future verbal forms and adverbial expressions, the Furies delineate a future aligned with the extinction of the human race.

The vocabulary in the next strophic pair not only maintains but also intensifies the eschatological tone. The *telos* that the Furies recount is loaded with 'disaster' (ξυμφορᾷ, 509), 'lament' (οἶκτον, 515) and 'grief' (στένει, 521). Following an interval of exhortations (526–42), the language revives the atmosphere of catastrophe: 'total destruction' (πανώλεθρος, 552), 'in violence' (βιαίως, 555), 'trouble' (πόνος, 556), 'in helpless torment' (ἀμηχάνοις δύαις, 561–

62). The final line of their lyric part eloquently describes the fortunes of humanity: 'he dies unwept, unseen' (ὤλετ᾽ ἄκλαυτος, ᾷστος, 565). Thus, while the transition from the system of retaliatory justice to the establishment of the Areopagus council is supposed to resolve the tension between past and future, the Furies see this change as a natural disaster happening now and lasting for all time to come. Their view of what is ahead is evidently illustrated with the line: 'an end is appointed and waits' (κύριον μένει τέλος, 544). In this sentence, the word τέλος means not only ongoing punishment without respite but also ultimate demise.

After Orestes' acquittal (752–53) and his celebratory speech (754–77), this sense of the *telos* as the world's end is revived. Upon the announcement of the verdict, the Chorus bursts out with a lyric song consisting of two strophic pairs, where each strophe is repeated in the antistrophe (778–92=808–22, 837–46=870–80). The Furies, enraged by the outcome of the trial, present themselves to Athena as victims of the struggle between the 'ancient laws' which they represent (778, 808, 838, 871) and the 'younger gods' (778, 808). Their singing constitutes continuous lament, this time of their own future, which they experience as their *telos*. However, they do not refrain from their desire to cause the downfall of the city as well (780–87=810–17):

> my heavy rancour | releases on this land—woe to it! — | a poison, a poison
> from my heart to requite my grief, | dripping from below the earth, intolerable.
> From this | a canker destroying leaves, destroying offspring—O Justice
> [Justice]! — | will sweep over and strike the land | with a blight killing men.

In these lines above, the Furies argue that their grief will cause the end of Athens. In the lines which follow and in the second strophic pair, the Furies experience their *telos* intensely. The Furies experience their own *telos* as the failure to complete their role as avengers in ways reminiscent of how Cassandra experiences her *telos* as her own death. Their metaphorical death is rooted in the new laws that have been established by Athena and the voting of the judges (788–92=818–22, 837–46=870–80). They are so immersed in this experience that Athena will need to intervene four times for them to begin to think about an alternative (794–807, 824–36, 848–69, 881–91).

In the two lyrical songs above, the idea of crisis, which is well embedded in the tragic narrative of the *Eumenides* as also seen in the previous chapter with regard to narrative closure,[66] is experienced as the consequence of the battle between the old and the new, leading now to another consequence, the ultimate end of the world. This bears characteristics of the imagery of crisis as defined by Kermode in his analysis of the apocalyptic in fiction.[67] Kermode's model of crisis consists of elements ('elements of the apocalyptic pattern'), such as terror, decadence, and scepticism, all demonstrated in abundance in the Furies' choral songs. In this sense, the *Eumenides* might be seen as constituting *a fiction of the end* not only as a fiction which dramatises *the end* of a world, but also in the sense that *the End* is 'happening at every moment',[68] or as being always 'immanent'.[69] I will explore in the next section how crisis can be perpetual while also superseded.

4.4.3. A new *future present*: the presence of the future

The decision of the Areopagus court to acquit Orestes marks a turning point in the narrative when the future becomes the only temporal sphere that matters for Orestes, Athena, and the Furies. The idea of the *future present* that we have previously seen dramatised in the *Agamemnon* comes back with a difference. While the *future present* in the *Agamemnon* invades and transforms the present, the *future present* in the *Eumenides* gives access to a future which exists within a present meant to last forever, exceeding the boundaries of the tetralogy. If the *future present* in the *Agamemnon* can be interpreted as the *presentness* of the future, the *future present* in the *Eumenides* should be interpreted as the ongoing *presence* of the future. The difference between the *presentness* of the future and the *presence* of the future lies in the particular way the future engages with the present: the future through its *presentness* becomes a powerful but momentary experience which breaks into the present, while the future through its *presence* evolves into an experience which promises to be unbroken and unending.

[66] See section 3.5. above ('Closure as possibility in the *Eumenides*').

[67] See for example, Kermode (1967) 82–88 for his analysis of the apocalyptic mode in Shakespeare's tragedies. See Michelakis (2013, 183–88) for an apocalyptic reading of the film version of Euripides' *Medea* by Lars von Trier.

[68] Kermode (1967) 25.

[69] Kermode (1967) e.g., 25.

The first demonstration of the *future present* in the *Eumenides* takes place in Orestes' speech.[70] In lines 754–77, Orestes celebrates his acquittal as his right to return to Argos and imagines his fame being spread in the future among the Greeks ('Among the Greeks they will be saying', 756). As representative of the people of Argos (by contrast to the *Libation Bearers* it is not clear at this point it is not if he envisages this role as the role of the king), he declares the peace between Athens and Argos with an oath which will have effect 'for the whole greatness of future time' (763). This eternal validity of the oath will be secured by himself even after death, as the dead will act against the violators of the oath. This is presented by Orestes by a strong sense of finality (766–73):

> Though we shall | ourselves be in our tomb by then, we shall bar the road | with impossible disasters for those who transgress my oaths | sworn now; we shall bring despair and ill omens to their | passage, so that they repent of their effort; but if oaths are fully | kept and if they always honour this city of Pallas with their | army in alliance, we are to be more kind towards them.

Orestes and the other dead will judge how the living respect his oath, and they will either inflict misfortunes, until the violators repent, or give blessings. While one might have expected for Orestes to experience his *present future* after his acquittal as the ultimate fulfilment of his role, this expectation is confounded. Orestes experiences his future as not something which is or will be *materialised* at the present, but as something which traverses the boundaries of the narrative, and of realism. Early signs of this *future present* have also made their appearance after Athena's brief proclamation (681–708) on the legitimacy and reliability of this legal institution for the future: 'For the future too this council of jurors | shall always exist for Aegeus' people' (683–84). As the above suggests, the progression of narrative time becomes suspended and the future is no longer pursued but is looked upon as a period solid and unending.

Another example of this type of *future present* is the blessings of the Furies which refer to the future of Athens under their authority as the Awesome Goddesses. As soon as they

[70] For the first part of Orestes' speech (754–64) and Orestes' oath, see sections 4.4.3. ('A new *future present*: the presence of the future') and 5.3.2. ('Prayers and oaths').

engage with Athena and her proposal, according to which they had to quit their role as avengers, their negotiations give way to an agreement (892–915). From now on the Furies will be the new, benevolent powers and protectors of the city of Athens. As such, their previous utterances promising the end of the world (778–93=808–23; 837–46=870–80) are also transformed into blessings for the city and its people (916–26, 938–49, 956–68, 976–88).[71] These blessings mark the beginning of the final scene of the play (916–1047). More specifically, the Athenian land will be always protected from the wind, the heat, and plant diseases, while it will always (ἀεὶ, 946) enjoy fertility as well (938–49). The Athenian people will be blessed with longevity 'at all times' (παντὶ χρόνῳ, 965) and protected forever (μήποτ', 977) from civil strife in a city where concord will prevail (956–68, 976–88). The abundance of future and optative verbal forms (916, 917, 922, 938, 943, 946, 948, 957, 960, 979, 984) alongside the atmosphere of a utopian world highlights this sense of the *presence* of the future as being *always* present.

I will now focus on how the final scene of the *Eumenides* (916–1047) invites the readers and the spectators to engage with the idea of the *future present* as a crystallised temporal sphere which is always present.[72] Its beginning is marked by the Furies' announcement that they finally agree to integrate into the religious and political life of Athens as the Awesome Goddesses ('I shall accept', 916). Taking on their new role immediately, they offer the city of Athens their blessings which have eternal effect, as discussed in the previous paragraph (916–26, 938–49, 956–68, 976–88). However, their celebratory songs are interrupted four times by Athena who also reminds of their permanent role as the Furies who punish the perpetrators (927–37, 949–55, 968–75, 998–95). This function will not be suspended in the future. The new Athenian deities can give not only 'some cause for singing' but also 'a life with eyes dimmed by tears' (953–55), as a reminder of what lies ahead can materialise at any minute. Their agreement is sealed through celebratory exchanges between them (996–1002, 1014–20) and Athena (1003–13), which also include all the Athenians. The new goddesses refer to the 'people of Athens' (ἀστικὸς λεώς, 997), while Athena refers to them as 'citizens' (πολίταις,

[71] Konstantinidou (2014) 17.

[72] For a different discussion of this scene, see section 3.5 above.

1113) and to the Awesome Goddesses as 'settlers' (μετοίκοις, 1011).[73] The blend of the future horizon with the present circumstances turns the future into a *future present*.

The idea of the *future present* concludes the play through the dramatisation of a procession (1032–47). Athena summons the servants of her temple to escort the Awesome Goddesses to their new home. Despite a textual gap of a couple of lines, it is most probable that, during the procession, the new goddesses are dressed up with celebratory, 'red-dyed clothing' (1028).[74] From now on, the new Athenian goddesses will incarnate both the Furies and the Eumenides, as what changes is their status of the Furies and not their identity.[75] Members of the Athenian society also participate in the procession. The secondary chorus, the women of the temple-servants, address them as 'countrymen' (1035) and as 'all people' (1038) and invite them twice to participate: 'Cry out your joy now, in song!' (1043, 1047). The call 'Cry out your joy now, in song!' is the final line of the play and awaits for a response every time the play is watched or read. Although Athena promises that this is a condition that will last for all future time ('for all time', διὰ παντός 975; 'always', αἰεὶ 992; 'in future', τὸ λοιπὸν 1031), the resolution which is offered is provisional, as it 'must be fought for again and again in the theatre and in the society that produces it.'[76] What they all celebrate is that past crimes will no longer determine the future, not only the future of the Atreides, as the acquittal of Orestes demonstrates, but also the future of everyone engaging with the play. The *future present* as seen at the end of the *Eumenides* is this co-existence of an endless future and recurring encounters with crises accompanied by the concurrent need for decision-making.

The matter of the intertemporality in the final scene of the *Eumenides* has been discussed in detail by Martin Revermann and Charles Chiasson in the contexts of ritual and aetiology, and of mythologisation respectively.[77] As it will be demonstrated below, although

[73] Collard (2002, on 1010) notes that the use of μετοίκοις for the Furies bear both similarities and differences with metics in classical Athens: like metics, the Furies will be sharing house and home, unlike metics they will acquire 'permanent home' and 'permanent and special tokens of worship'. Like metics, the Furies will have a sponsor, Athena. Unlike metics, they do not need a citizen sponsor, as Athena acts as a sponsor, 'before she urges the citizens jurors to accept them'.

[74] Easterling (1988) 99 and n. 31; Taplin (1977) 412–13. Wilson & Taplin (1993) 180 n. 45: 'The fact that the robes must have been on over their dark outfits makes of their action a '(re)costuming and not a 'reidentification'. See also Macleod (1975) on the clothing in the *Oresteia*.

[75] Bacon (2001) 58–59. See also previous note.

[76] Rehm (1992) 105.

[77] Grethlein (2013b) has used the term 'intertemporality' for the temporal dynamics in the choral songs of the *Oresteia*. See section 5.3.1. below ('Omens, prophecies, oracles').

these discussions are useful in our understanding of how the ending of the *Eumenides* becomes relevant to the reader and the viewer, I suggest that they point in the direction of a timelessness which does not do justice to the ongoing nature of crisis and decision-making that the end of the play keeps open.

Revermann, drawing on Bakhtin's theory on *chronotopes*, points out that the temporal (and spatial) dynamics of the play invite the readers and the spectators to briefly dissociate from the presented world.[78] These dynamics are manifested through two aetiologies, the establishment of the Areopagus council and the worship of the Eumenides.[79] Their narratives as aetiologies involve the conflation of the present, the one dramatised on stage by the characters, with the past, the one experienced in real life by the audience.[80] The aetiological narratives of the *Eumenides* shift the focus to the future, as they can be read as compact and complete and not confined to what becomes in Euripides a closural device.[81] As Revermann points out, 'the notion of ritually suspended time, ...is iterative, cyclical, and emphatically 'ever-present''.[82] That ever-presence in my analysis has to do not only with aetiology, but also with an ongoing oscillation between aetiology and judgement.

Chiasson argues that the Athenians are mythologised by Athena in the final scene of the *Eumenides*. In doing so, he introduces a parallelism between the Athenians and the heroic age of Hesiod. Chiasson also employs the term 'apocalyptic', noting that 'Aeschylus' apocalyptic Athens serves as a local rebuttal to Hesiod's pan-Hellenic myth of increasing human alienation from the divine over time'.[83] In Hesiod' *Works and Days* the heroic age is presented outside the limits of the human world, away from human concerns such as the fear

[78] Revermann (2008). He acknowledges the *Eumenides* as 'an excellent point of departure' to discuss poetics of time (and space) (239).

[79] On the Areopagus council, see Wallace (1989). On the associations of the *Oresteia* with the political situation of 458 BC, see Hall (2015) 255–56, Fletcher (2011) 67–69. On bibliography on the ending of the *Eumenides* with regard to the connection between the Furies and the Σεμναί Θεαί, see Konstantinidou (2014) 17 n. 42.

[80] Although scholars do not agree about their existence in the religious life of Athens or it is Aeschylus' innovation. See previous note. For example, Mikalson (1991, 214–17) argues that the aetiology of the Eumenides as Athenian goddesses does not reflect the current state, but it is something completely new.

[81] Revermann (2008) 253. Wilson & Taplin note that 'this 'aetiology' opens a perspective beyond the end of the drama, and beyond the confines of the *orchestra*, to the future of tragedy itself' (1993, 177). On bibliography about aetiology and tragedy, see Romano (2012) 128 n. 5.

[82] Revermann (2008) 249.

[83] Chiasson (1999–2000) 139. On the matter of the address to the Athenian audience, see Chiasson (1999–2000) 146 and n. 19.

of death. Chiasson argues that, although the Athenians will benefit from an eternal prosperity which is reminiscent of this heroic age, the mythologisation in the *Eumenides* eliminates the temporal distance between the world of the audience and the world of the play.[84] Although the absence of the flow of real time reinforces the similarities between the closing scene and a utopian fantasy where the sense of fulfilment is always deferred to the future, Chiasson suggests that in the closing scene the humans and the gods collaborate and look at a common future, even if the prosperity is conditional on the reverence of the Athenians towards the gods. This is similar to what Konstantinidou sees as the necessary balance between the new legal establishment and the need for religiousness,[85] as it is assumed that the Awesome Goddesses will have a parallel role with the human council. Once again, while I agree that conditionality is an important feature of the end of the *Eumenides*, in my analysis that conditionality is defined not by the performativity of ritual, but by the need to allow for crisis and decision-making.

The above brings us back to Kermode's idea of the apocalyptic in fiction and its embedded idea of renovation.[86] For Kermode, a period of decadence is followed by a period of renovation. In the *Eumenides*, this period is identified by the establishment of the Areopagus council which brings about a major change from the practice of retaliation to the constitution of a judicial system. As I argued above, this marks the beginning of a new world.[87] However, this new beginning does not cancel the fear of the end of the world which was fuelled by the Furies in their two choral songs (490–565, 754–915). Although their transformation into the Awesome Goddesses saves the world from catastrophe, this is only temporary, as Athena takes over the role of the one who warns for the future (926–37, 949–55, 968–75, 988–95). Thus, the apocalyptic mode of thought is not fulfilled through the end of the world itself. The apocalyptic way of thinking in the *Eumenides* revolves not only around the end but also around ways of averting it. As Kermode notes: 'For to make sense of our lives from where we are, as it were, stranded in the middle, we need fictions of beginnings and fictions of ends,

[84] Chiasson (1999–2000) 149. Chiasson illustrates the Panathenaic procession of the Parthenon's frieze as parallel of the closing scene of the *Eumenides* in the sense that in both the citizens of Athens outlived their physical death (157–59). On the connection between the procession in the play and Panathenaea, see also Easterling (1988) 99 and n. 31.

[85] Konstantinidou (2014) 18–19.

[86] Kermode (1967) e.g., 9, 189.

[87] Kermode (1967, 5–6) juxtaposes the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, with only the latter to follow the apocalyptic model.

fictions which unite beginning and end and endow the interval between them with meaning.'[88]

The preoccupations of the final scene of the *Eumenides* (916–1047) with the extra-dramatic time highlight the idea of the *presentness* of the future and redefine the tension between the concepts of expectation and experience.[89] As the secondary chorus ask from the participants and the attendants of the procession to sing along, the closing lines of the play call for the participation of individuals who are situated both inside and outside the dramatic space and time. As we discussed above, the establishment of the Areopagus council as the advent of modernity is lived as a new *present future* where the fulfilment of expectations is realised instantaneously.[90] In this new world, the past is no longer a burden, and the future becomes a fast-changing environment where people will have to adapt themselves more quickly. This temporal acceleration shows how the future does not derive exclusively from past experience. Expectations can take the shape of hope, fear, wishes, desires, and whatever else the future might bring.[91] At the end of the play this temporal acceleration that we find in the rest of the narrative is suspended. What takes overs suggests that the future is imagined as imminent. This *future present* is identified with the *telos* 'as an immovable limit to the horizon of expectation'.[92] If this is a characteristic that Koselleck associates with the pre-modern period, the final scene of the *Eumenides* takes us a step further: the future is not presented as always unreachable and detached from the idea of experience. One is offered the opportunity to *observe* how the expectation of the future is identified and conflated with the experience of the future, and the future is dramatised through its *presence*.

Drawing on how Grethlein employs *future past* in historiography, I argue that the concept of *future present*, apart from conveying a tension between present and future within a narrative, also outlines the temporal dynamics between the characters and those who engage with this narrative. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Grethlein defines the concept of *future past* as the endpoint (*telos*) from which the historian or the reader looks at the

[88] Kermode (1967) 190.

[89] For more on those preoccupations which take over the whole narrative, see section 3.5 (especially, p. 66).

[90] In Koselleck's argument, the sphere of the fulfilment of the future shifts from the Hereafter before modernity to the real world after modernity (2004, 265).

[91] For an extended discussion, see Koselleck (2004) 255–75.

[92] Koselleck (2004) 264.

past events, and the subsequent temporal asymmetry which lies between the characters and the historian or the readers of the historical narrative.[93] This temporal asymmetry puts the historian or the reader in a position which is privileged by hindsight. According to Grethlein, this hindsight we gain from *future past* 'lets us replace the fragility of our lives with sovereignty.'[94] In tragic narrative, the terms *future present* and *present future* do not conceptualise a similar temporal asymmetry between the tragic characters and their observers which would leave their observers with a sense of a hindsight. What these terms conceptualise is a complex, plot-generated temporal experience which is lived by both those inside and outside the tragic narrative. By contrast to historiography, tragedy does not equip any of the parties involved with a hindsight that would offer a similar type of 'sovereignty'. In the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*, the hindsight, originated either in foreshadowing devices (characters, spectators and readers) or prior knowledge (spectators and readers), does not prevent them from the agonising encounter with the future. In the *Eumenides*, this encounter grows into an ongoing process, and is transferred to those who can grasp extra-dramatic time, when crisis and decision-making are at the centre of human activity.

What happens in the *Eumenides* can be seen by analogy to the tension between the readers, the character, and the narrator in the *Aeneid* that Duncan Kennedy studies.[95] Kennedy argues that, unlike other fictional worlds such as the *Odyssey* or *Oedipus the King*, where the reader or the spectator subscribes to the temporal worldview of the plot from the outside, the narrative of the *Aeneid* has Jupiter prophesying historical events of the Augustan era that implicate the reader in more direct way. These events are future for Aeneas who looks forward to them, but past for the Virgilian narrator and his readers who look back on them.[96] One can find similar characteristics in the *Eumenides*. By contrast to the plots of the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* which are based on myth, the *Eumenides* dramatises historical events, such as the alliance between Athens and Argos and the establishment of the Areopagus

[93] See section 4.1 above.

[94] Grethlein (2013a) 6.

[95] Kennedy (2013) 95: 'It is the explicit representation in the person of Jupiter within the narrative of the view forwards of the future from the narrative's present as *known*, its end and its significance already *determined*, that has made the *Aeneid* the paradigm of teleological narrative.'

[96] Kennedy (2013) 94.

court,[97] which are prophesied by Orestes and Athena. Like Virgil's Jupiter, Athena and Orestes declare an endless future,[98] combined with the idea that the present is transient.[99] However, although the *Aeneid* employs 'the representation within the narrative of an embodied providential perspective',[100] the *Eumenides* employs the representation within the narrative of an embodied perspective which has to do with judgment and consensus building.

The ideas of progress, change, decision-making, and crisis, which define how the *Eumenides* ends, are also central for the end of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, the comedy of 405 BCE, whose final ten lines (1524–33) re-enact the final fifteen lines of the *Eumenides* (1033–47) in both visual and verbal terms.[101] The comedy, often seen as a 'foundational work of literary and cultural tradition'[102] which performs a 'historical awareness of literary change',[103] quotes almost verbatim Athena's optimistic remarks about the future of the city at the end of the *Eumenides* (1012–13 of the *Eumenides* in 1530 of the *Frogs*). First, both plays dramatise a judgement and its aftermath. Second, in both plays, the resolution is provided at the very end and has implications that extend beyond the play and into the world of its audience and readers. Finally, both narratives reinstate the past, which in the *Eumenides* is incarnated by the Furies as Awesome Goddesses, and in the *Frogs* by Aeschylus, resurrected from the dead, as the future saviour of Athens. A closer reading of the two scenes goes beyond the scope of this discussion, but, to put it simply, both endings deal with the aftermath of a κρίσις (judgment) and the question of how it will not turn into an going crisis (catastrophe).

Although Garvie notes that '[t]he *Eumenides* is perhaps the most difficult to relate to modern concerns',[104] I have argued that the play should be related to modern conceptualisations of time such as *future present* and *present future* precisely, because it dramatises periods of transition and crisis, in the context of dealing with the future and its

[97] Another historical event is possibly the establishment of the cult of the Eumenides.

[98] For the *Aeneid* (1, 278–9), see for example: 'To these I give no bounded times or power, | but empire without end ('sine fine)'. For a comparison between *finis* in the *Aeneid* and τέλος in the *Libation Bearers*, see section 3.4.

[99] Kennedy (2013) 96.

[100] Kennedy (2013) 96.

[101] Wilson & Taplin (1993, 180 n. 40) note: 'a visual and verbal 're-play' of the end of the *Eumenides*.' On the textual similarities, difference, and more details, see Bassi (2016b) 173–74 and n. 105–7; Sells (2012) 91–93.

[102] Bassi (2016b) 145 and n. 5.

[103] Kennedy (1989) ix. Chiasson (1999–2000, 158 and n. 55) citing Dover (1997, 15–16) argues that the audience of the *Frogs* was equally familiar with Aeschylus' plays as with Euripides' plays.

[104] Garvie (2014) 35.

uncertainty. Shifting from a progressive future radically different from the past, to the future as the end of the world, and, finally, to the future as solidified and always present at the end of the play, the *Eumenides* revisits and dramatises elusive concepts such as crisis, change, and progress, and implicates anyone who reads and watches in thinking through them.

4.5. *Proteus* between *present future* and *future present*

Arguably *Proteus* revisits the experience of *present future* and *future present* in a way that concludes the tetralogy in a comforting way, following previous encounters with the uncertainty of time. One can assume that, in a play which, most likely, dramatises a shipwreck and the troubles of its crew, the relation between the present and the future can best be understood through the concept of *present future*. Events such the perilous voyage of Menelaus and his companions (who end up adrift in Egypt, far from mainland Greece), and the castaways' arrival in an unknown shore, point in the direction of a future which revolves around a day-by-day existence. If the story follows the *Odyssey*, Menelaus and his companions have to capture Proteus and find a way to put an end to his transformations, a scene which would be an eloquent example of the *present future*, as it is based on unpredictability and contingency.

If Proteus is forced to prophesy Menelaus' future, features of the *present future* may quickly give way to control and necessity which are more typically associated with the *future present*. It is quite likely that Proteus (and perhaps his daughter's Eido), prophesies Menelaus' return to Argos. While in the *Eumenides* Orestes' return to Argos is embedded in the narrative only as a promise, in *Proteus* Menelaus' return must be much more central to the plot. Thus, Menelaus' experience of his *future present* works as a counterbalance and conclusion of his previous experience of the *present future*, which makes him the only character in the tetralogy whose transition from *present future* to *future present* is successfully completed.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Coo argues that the celebratory ending of the play must be seen in the context of the temporal relation between *Proteus* and the tragic plays as 'the desire for (aspects of) an idealised past'.[105] Coo draws on a model of nostalgia according

[105] Coo (2019) 2.

to which Menelaus' present in *Proteus* needs to be seen as a happy past that predates the *Agamemnon*, contrasted to the gloomy future that Menelaus has on his return to mainland Greece.[106] This reading suggests a cyclical understanding of time, according to which the characters' future is something that lies outside the plot and, therefore, needs to be searched outside the plot. I would argue that this approach needs to be complemented by addressing the question of what configurations of time might be dramatised *within Proteus*.

Within *Proteus*, the combination of *present future* and *future present*, and, arguably, the transition from one to the other, shows how Menelaus, like the other characters of the play, imagines and experiences his future at the present of the dramatic action. While in the *Eumenides*, the transition from the *present future* to the *future present* transforms the idea of catastrophe as certainty to catastrophe as potentiality, in the case of *Proteus* this transition transforms catastrophe as a lived reality to something that can be left behind.

4.6. Conclusion

In addition to the semantic variations of the word *telos* discussed in the Chapters 2 and 3, the idea of *telos* can be also associated with the different types of temporal experiences conceptualised through the terms *present future* and *future present*. As critical stances towards the future, these concepts interact with one another across the four plays. In the *Agamemnon* the future of the characters breaks forcefully into the present (*future present*). In the *Libation Bearers* it is a reverse process that takes place, with the present of the characters being the one that breaks into their future (*present future*), while the end of the play brings in another *future present* as a reminder of their synergy. In the *Eumenides* the focus shifts to the *present future* as the present which determines the future not as a disruption (as in the *Libation Bearers*), but as a new order. The *Eumenides* engages with the mode of the *future present* as a new order that has to co-exist with the possibility of crisis. Placing *Proteus* at the end of the tetralogy makes possible to return to the ideas of *future present* and *present future* in a way that facilitates the readers' and the spectators' engagement with the idea of a future which is contained within the world of myth, and can, therefore, be brought under control.

[106] See Coo (2019) 13–18.

5

Foreshadowing and *Sideshadowing*: between open and closed futures

5.1. Introduction

The terms *open* and *closed* convey the different levels of accessibility which one can develop in relation to the future as a sphere of human activity.[1] In this chapter, 'open future' and 'closed future' are used as guidelines for grasping the future which is created within the dramatic narrative. In order to shed light into the different ways in which the openness and closedness of the future manifest themselves while being experienced by the readers and the spectators through Ricoeur's Mimesis 3, I employ the concepts of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*.

Although the use of *foreshadowing* in archaic and classic Greek narrative has been widely acknowledged since antiquity (see further section 5.2 below), *sideshadowing* is a recent term in the history of literary criticism. The technique of *foreshadowing* offers a glimpse of *the* future before it happens, while the technique of *sideshadowing* highlights that the future ahead is only *one* of several other possibilities. These two concepts are instrumental for bridging any gaps created between the conceptualisation of *openness* and *closedness* of the future and their narrativisation in the *Oresteia*. By employing *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* in my discussion, I focus on what it is to be for a reader or a spectator to follow a story and contemplate the future which is either brought to the fore prematurely (*foreshadowing*) or

[1] Segal (2007).

arrives from the sideways (*sideshadowing*). In what follows, I discuss omens, prophecies, oracles, oaths, dreams, and prayers as *foreshadowing* techniques. I also discuss nodal points, unexposed backstories, and statements of alternative futures as *sideshadowing* techniques. I argue that such techniques help us map the diverse ways in which the dramatic narrative invites us to engage with the ideas of the open future and closed future. Whereas in Chapters 3 and 4 I used the terms 'open' and 'closed' in the context of the literary phenomenon of closure and discussions of the philosophy of time respectively, in this Chapter I subject the same terms to a closer analysis with the help of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*. My main argument is that *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* in the *Oresteia* operate not as secure guides for a distinction between *closed future* and *open future* respectively, but as indicators of their interchangeable employment within the dramatic narrative. This invites us to witness how *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* become disengaged from their traditional counterparts, the *closed* and *open future* (and related terms such as accessibility and predictability, and inaccessibility and unpredictability of the future), and reassemble with those counterparts in unexpected ways.

5.2. Theoretical prelude

The term *foreshadowing* has not been developed systematically as a critical term, but it is commonly used to describe a regular and generic literary effect.[2] Expressions such as 'the shadow thrown before (an object)' and 'the imperfect representation of something to come'[3] show clearly how foreshadowing takes place in narrative. By casting a 'shadow' of the future onto the present, the future is foretold only partially and indirectly. *Foreshadowing* is one of the effects of the broader phenomenon that Genette identifies as *prolepsis*: 'any narrative manoeuvre that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later'.[4] In this chapter, I use the term *foreshadowing* drawing on Gary Saul Morson who uses it as a narrative technique for future events that cast a shadow over the unfolding of the action. In

[2] For examples, see Morson (1994) 54–55.

[3] *OED* s. v. *foreshadow* (v).

[4] Genette (1980) 40. For the relation between *prolepsis* and anticipation, see Liveley (2017). On anticipation and suspense, see Chapter 6 'Suspense'.

this sense, the future is represented as inevitable, and, thus, closed.[5] However, as my analysis will show, foreshadowing techniques can also point towards an open future.

The concept of *sideshadowing* was developed in the early 1990s by the literary theorists Michael André Bernstein and Gary Saul Morson, by analogy with the concept of *foreshadowing*.[6] Morson employs sideshadowing in fictional narrative and, more specifically, in the Russian novel,[7] while Bernstein discusses *sideshadowing* in relation to historical narrative. While in *foreshadowing* a shadow of the future is cast upon the present, in *sideshadowing*, as Bernstein and Morson argue, a shadow from the *side* is cast upon the present. This 'side' refers to a future which is considered open, in the sense that it involves alternative paths to the one actualised.[8] Because *sideshadowing* embraces more than one path, it challenges the concept of inevitability. Considering not only which path becomes actualised, but also which one is rejected, *sideshadowing* enhances our understanding of the future as consisting of multiple possibilities. As Morson suggests, the unactualised possibilities define the quality of the actualised ones.[9]

Although the terms *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* are interrelated, their history in classical studies is dissimilar. The earliest known evidence of acknowledging the employment of advance references and hints at future events as a narrative technique can be found in the ancient scholia of epic poetry.[10] This technique is conceptualised by the scholiasts mainly with the Greek terms *prooikonomia* (προοικονομία), *proanaphonesis* (προαναφώνησις), and *proekthesis* (προέκθεσις), and can be associated with the modern terms of *narrative prolepsis*

[5] Morson (1994) 8, (1998) 600. For a critique on Morson's idea of *foreshadowing*, see Kennedy (2013) 89–102.

[6] Morson (1994) 6 n. 4; Bernstein (1994).

[7] Morson (1994, 120) considers Fyod or Dostoevsky 'a master of sideshadowing'. Morson (1994, 120, 148) provides extracts from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace* and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* and *The Possessed*. See also Morson (1994, 148–50) on *sideshadowing* beyond the Russian novel. On the application of *sideshadowing* in education studies, see Reilly (2009), and in film studies, Skoller (2005).

[8] Morson (1998) 602.

[9] Morson (1994) 119–20.

[10] In the Greek scholia as προλαμβάνειν. On *prolepsis* in ancient scholia, see Liveley (2019) 88–89, 103–5, (2017) 8; Grethlein (2017) 114; Nünlist (2009) 35 and n. 40; Meijering (1987) 209. For an overview of the scholia in Aeschylus (with bibliography), see Dickey (2007) 35–38; on the standard edition of the scholia in five plays of Aeschylus, see Smith (1982) and (1976).

and *foreshadowing*.[11] Although these terms are used by the ancient scholiasts varyingly,[12] they all adhere to the rules of *oikonomia*, the author's technique of managing and arranging the available material.[13] More specifically, *oikonomia* in dramatic poetry points to the playwright's application of narrative techniques for achieving the maximum aesthetic effect, while also observing the rules of unfolding the plot in a coherent manner.[14]

The aspect of *oikonomia* which matters the most for the concept of *foreshadowing* is, as already mentioned, *pro-oikonomia*. The technique of *prooikonomia* refers to the writer's aspiration of arranging the material and presenting the events of the plot *ahead* and *in advance* - as the prefix *pro-* implies, for the sake not only of enhancing the causality of the plot, but also of generating curiosity for what is coming next.[15] The emphasis on the chronological priority of *prooikonomia* is central to discussions of *foreshadowing*, *suspense*, and *surprise*. As the scholia suggest, *prooikonomia* expresses the meaning of preparation for what is to come, while *proanaphonesis* refers to explicit hints to the future of the plot and to how these hints affect the reader. This observation makes the discussion of *proanaphonesis* useful also for the discussion of suspense in Chapter 6.[16]

Most of the ancient scholia on the terms above relate to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,[17] rather than to tragedy. The relevant comments on tragedy are very limited: although they provide some background, they do not offer any detailed insights into *foreshadowing* as a literary technique in Aeschylus.

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[11] Other relevant terms that have survived: *prokataskeue* (προκατασκευή, προκατασκευάζειν), *proparaskeue* (προπαρασκευή, προπαρασκευάζειν), *protherapeia* (προθεραπεία, προθεραπεύειν). See Meijering (1987) 202.

[12] Of the terms mentioned above, *prooikonomia* has the weakest connection to *prolepsis* and *foreshadowing* and *proanaphonesis* the strongest. See Nünlist (2009) 35.

[13] The term *oikonomia* is also found in Aristotle who uses it, albeit without much clarity, as a significant requirement which Euripides fails to meet (*oikonomein* 1453a22). On the concept and meanings of *oikonomia*, see Nünlist (2009) 24–27 with accompanying notes. See also Meijering (1987) 135.

[14] For the link between *oikonomia* and plausibility, see Nünlist (2009) 28 and n. 17.

[15] On the aspect of *oikonomia* as the postponement of the climax of the plot in the ancient scholia, see Chapter 6 below, especially sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.3.

[16] For an example of how *oikonomia* is related to suspense, see section 6.2 below.

[17] The scholia on the *Iliad* also attest to the employment of *external prolepsis* (Schol. bT *Il*. 21.376 ex.), in which the promise for future fulfilment lies *outside* the temporal boundaries of the text. See Nünlist (2009) 41. This type of *prolepsis* shares some characteristics with the modern idea of *sideshadowing*. Although an *external prolepsis* may still include details about a future to come, such a future retains its character as only *pending* and *possible* when narrative concludes. See further in section 5.4 ('*Sideshadowing*') below.

In an article written as early as 1931, George Duckworth demonstrated how *proanaphonesis* and related terms are used in epic scholia, and he discussed these terms with the help of the modern term *foreshadowing*. The main argument of the article was that *foreshadowing* prepares the Homeric audiences for what follows in such a way that it reduces their experience of uncertainty, fear, and agony.[18] By contrast to the effect that *foreshadowing* is supposed to achieve in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* according to Duckworth, I will show below that the effect of *foreshadowing* in the *Oresteia* rests on the following two conditions: the development of the reader's and the spectator's knowledge which, however, prepares only for a future which is going to be uncertain, full of surprises, and indefinitely unspecified (see further section 5.3 below).

What one can learn about *foreshadowing* from the tragic scholia comes primarily from Euripides' *Electra* and Sophocles' *Ajax*. Here, the views displayed on the effect of *foreshadowing* point in rather different directions. Take, for instance, the employment of the *foreshadowing* technique at the prologue of the play, where Euripides 'foreshadows the future'.[19] This comment constitutes a criticism against Euripides' employment of *foreshadowing* technique at this part of the play: the nurse unveils too much and prematurely through her uncertainty about how Medea will cope with her anger and sadness.[20] By contrast, the scholia give credit to Sophocles for *foreshadowing* or *prolepsis* of the kind that does not spoil the story 'by anticipating the future' but makes the spectator attentive, 'because he is curious to learn how the fearful will come'.[21] The above offer a general idea of how ancient critics of drama may have evaluated employments of *foreshadowing* both as a device of efficient *oikonomia* and as a rhetorical device utilised to affect the audience. The issue of how ancient criticism approaches suspenseful narratives will be further pursued in Chapter 6 in relation to suspense.[22]

[18] Duckworth (1931) 330.

[19] Euripides' *Medea* schol.: προλέγειν τα μέλλοντα/ τα μέλλοντα ἀναφωνεῖ. See Meijering (1987) 207.

[20] See Nünlist (2009) 142. See also Meijering (1987) 207–8, for an additional example from Euripides' *Hecuba* where the scholiast refers to Euripides' tendency to offer not just hints but clarity about the upcoming events.

[21] Sophocles' *Ajax* schol. 389c: 'prolepses' for προφωνήσεις, 'by anticipating the future' for προλαμβάνουσαι τό μέλλον. On the ancient scholia and the effect of *suspense*, see section 6.2 below.

[22] Especially in section 6.2 'Theoretical prelude'.

While *foreshadowing* is a term with a long history that goes back to the beginning of the 20th century,[23] *sideshadowing* was adopted in classical scholarship much more recently, following its coining in 1994.[24] As far as the study of Greek drama is concerned, while *foreshadowing* has been used extensively (even if not systematically), there has been reluctance to use the term *sideshadowing*. This is probably a symptom of a more general tendency, discussed in Chapter 3, to read Greek tragedy teleologically.

A recent exception to this tendency is Duncan Kennedy's analysis of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* which indicates that both open future and closed future can be at play.[25] Unlike the certainty with which many scholars argue that the prophecy foreshadows the future in a deterministic way that rules out free will,[26] Kennedy argues that a series of 'unresolved discrepancies'[27] in the plot do not necessarily point to the 'grand affirmation of the prophecy'.[28] What Kennedy sees in Oedipus is an individual who, first, believes that he is free to determine his future, but, then, entangled by the narrative, he succumbs to the idea that the world is deterministic. Such a combination of free will and determinism as constituent elements of the narrative creates infinite possibilities of readings and interpretations.

5.3. *Foreshadowing*

It is often acknowledged that the *Oresteia* 'is filled with the portentous'.[29] The technique of *foreshadowing* relies on the 'surplus of knowledge'[30] which is usually possessed by the gods and goddesses. In other words '[d]ivination presupposes the pervasive contrast between divine epistemic superiority (often, omniscience) and mortal epistemic limitation.'[31] The gods

[23] See for example, Murgatroyd (2001) on Apuleius; Moskalew (1983) on Vergil; Davies (1989a) on myth; Stanley (1965) on Vergil; Beaty (1960) on Silius Italicus; Duckworth (1934) on Homer, Vergil and Apollonius; Stuart (1918) on Euripides. See also Morrison (1991) 146 and n. 2 with further bibliography.

[24] Liveley (2017, 15–16) on Livy, (2008) on Ovid; Grethlein (2013a) 14, (2010) 242, 248–52, (2009) & Hau (2013) on Greek historiography; Pagán (2006) on Latin historiography; Cowan (2008) on Silius Italicus.

[25] Kennedy (2013) 84–118, more specifically 100–17, citing Peradotto (1992) and Goodhart (1978).

[26] One example is Morson (1994) 58–61.

[27] Kennedy (2013) 109.

[28] Kennedy (2013) 107.

[29] Quote by Roberts (1985) 283 and n. 1. See also, Goward (1999) 55–56.

[30] Bakhtin (1981), cited and discussed by Morson (1994, 44) and Kennedy (2013, 86, 94). See section 1.2.

[31] Tor (2017) 108.

and the goddesses decide to share this knowledge with the human characters through omens, prophecies, and oracles. Other ways of sharing knowledge involve prayers, oaths, and dreams where the divine approval or disapproval frames the characters' hopes and desires. Although Aeschylus' theology is a much discussed topic in the Classical studies,[32] its explorations have been rather restricted both in methodology and themes.[33] What follows explores how the narrative employs the idea of the divine intervention through the *foreshadowing* technique, but also how *foreshadowing* can be understood in a context that goes beyond the idea of closed future and divine providence.

5.3.1. Omens, prophecies, oracles

In this section I focus on examples of prophetic and oracular discourse.[34] First, I will discuss the omen which takes place in the parodos of the *Agamemnon* (104–259). Then, I will move to Cassandra's prophecies in the same play (1035–330) and to the prophecies articulated by Athena in the *Eumenides* (681–706; 794–807, 824–36, 847–69, 968–75). Finally, my focus will shift to the oracle in the *Libation Bearers*, where Apollo's oracle is mentioned on several occasions, according to which Orestes must commit the matricide (269–355, 554–59, 900-2, 1029–39). The section concludes with a brief discussion of the satyr drama *Proteus* and, more specifically, of Proteus' prophecy regarding Menelaus' future.

The narrative of the omen (104–259) occupies a large part of the parodos of the *Agamemnon*, the 'longest choral sequence in surviving Tragedy' (40–257).[35] During this sequence, the elders of Argos narrate the recent past, revisit the background of the Trojan War (40–82), comment on the present, while they are unaware of the sack of Troy (82–103), and, then, move on to the remote past which precedes the departure of the Greek army for Troy (104–247), before returning to the present (248–57). It is within this intertemporal framework

[32] See for example, Rader (2015); Citti (1962).

[33] See also Mikalson (1991, 217) who argues that the study of Aeschylus' theological system and of the particular character of the 'religion' it generates are really subjects of literary criticism and intellectual history, not of Religiosgeschichte.'

[34] For bibliography on prophecy and portents in the *Oresteia*, see Roberts (1985) 283 n. 1. See Kamerbeek (1965) where the 'eminent relevancy of these phenomena both to dramatic structure and to tragic meaning' is emphasized in a number of examples.

[35] Collard (2002) 116.

that the narrative of the omen is placed at the centre of the choral sequence.[36] Thus, the omen becomes immediately relevant to the dramatic future which lies ahead, not only of the *Agamemnon*, but also those of the following plays, maintaining its ominous power for events to come.

The parodos begins with an extended simile (40–67), where Menelaus' and Agamemnon's cries for the abduction of Helen are likened to vultures' cries who have been deprived of their children. The Chorus, considering the Trojan war which inflicted many casualties to the Trojans and the Danaans (63–66), draws the following conclusion (67–71):

> Things are now as they are (ἔστι δ᾽ ὅπῃ νῦν ἐστι); | they will be fulfilled in what is fated (τελεῖται δ᾽ ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον);[37] | neither burnt sacrifice nor libation | of offerings without fire | will soothe (παραθέλξει) intense anger away.

The use of present and future tenses and the reference to the power of fate are markers of the *foreshadowing* technique. Their reference to Paris' futile sacrifices as an attempt to appease the divine anger prepares for their detailed description of Clytemnestra's similar efforts to appease the gods through sacrifices (87–96, 100–3). The conclusion to be drawn is that, just as Paris' offerings did not impede the sack of Troy and as the sacrifice of Iphigenia did not impede the loss of many Greeks, so will Clytemnestra's sacrifices not appease the anger gathering over the house of Agamemnon. Although the omen is narrated in the context of recalling the past, it is employed to foreshadow the future.

The members of the Chorus declare themselves as accurate interpreters of past events (104–5) and embark on the narration of the omen which dates back to the time when the Greek fleet was preparing to depart for Troy. They start with a past narration in which a bird of omen which attacks a hare bearing offspring personifies Menelaus and Agamemnon (104–21). The interpretation of the omen by Calchas is recalled in an embedded narrative quoted verbatim in direct speech (126–55):

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[36] For the term 'intertemporal', I draw on Grethlein's essay on the issue of intertemporality of the Chorus in the *Agamemnon* (2013b).

[37] On the meaning of τελεῖται as '(will be) fulfilled' see sections 2.2 and 2.3.

> 'In time | our advance captures Priam's city, | and Fate before its walls will sack| its teeming herds of people, | all of them there, in violence;| only let no jealousy from god | bring darkness on Troy's great bridle-bit | if that is stricken first, now it goes | on campaign! Pity makes holy Artemis | grudge her father's winged hounds | the wretched hare, unborn litter and all, their sacrifice; | she loathes the eagles' meal. | Cry 'Sorrow, sorrow!', but let the good prevail! | Such is Hecate's great goodwill | to the dewy, helpless young of ravening lions, | and her delight in the suckling whelps | of all beasts that haunt the wild; | she asks fulfilment for these omens. | The manifestation of the birds is favourable but means blame. | Apollo there! Healer indeed, I call on you, | lest she make contrary winds for the Danaans, | long delays that keep the ships from sailing, | in her urge for a second sacrifice, | one with no music, no feasting, | an architect of feuds born in the family, | with no fear of the man; | for there stays in wait (μίμνει) a fearsome, resurgent, | treacherous keeper of the house, an unforgetting (μνάμων) Wrath | (Μῆνις) which avenges children.'

According to Calchas, Artemis orders Iphigeneia's sacrifice[38] which will finally allow the Greek fleet to depart from Aulis and to fulfil their victory at Troy. The direct speech which the Chorus uses to bring the past back to life breaks down the distinction between past and present and allows the omen to foreshadow not only events that have taken place but also events that are still to come.[39]

The narrative of the omen in the *Agamemnon* bears specific elements which are not typical of other prophetic speeches. As both parts of the Chorus' narration refer to events which were fulfilled in the past, such as the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and the sack of Troy, one could argue that the omen is employed as a framework which serves merely the purpose of exposition of past events (125–34). Nevertheless, I argue that the omen transcends the future that it refers to and maintains its power to relate to events yet to come. While for Calchas the

[38] For reasons which do not come up as clear and binding for Agamemnon, as the section under 5.4.1. 'Nodal points' below explores.

[39] For the use of direct speech in choral odes, see Rutherford (2006) 17; Fletcher (1997); Bers (1997).

omen was instantly interpreted as a manifestation of Artemis' anger for Iphigenia's sacrifice, and therefore as a sign of the future that ends with the sack of Troy, the omen *also* operates as a warning for the future beyond that, contributing to a sense of impending doom. Although omens are generally employed as manifestations of a closed future, and this is certainly how Calchas approaches his task of interpreting it, the omen in the parodos of the *Agamemnon* expands this sense of inevitability to include events yet to be identified.

The last two lines of Calchas' interpretation are of particular importance for our understanding of the omen as a *foreshadowing* device in the *Agamemnon*. The verb μίμνει ('stays in wait') displays the prolonged impact of Iphigenia's sacrifice into the future. This impact is identified as μῆνις ('Wrath'), a recurrent theme in the plays.[40] This wrath is 'resurgent' (παλίνορτος, 154) which means that it rises again and again, despite periods of dormancy. The next three adjectives demonstrate that the Wrath becomes now identified with the person in whom the wrath will reside.[41] It is a 'treacherous keeper of the house', 'unforgetting' and 'child-avenging' (οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων Μῆνις τεκνόποινος, 155), in the sense that the agent of the wrath will act in the future motivated by past crimes, and the aim of the action will be to avenge the loss of a child/children (Iphigeneia and maybe Thyestes' children). It is possible that the adjective τεκνόποινος alludes to another child, Orestes, who will manifest himself as an agent of revenge for the death of his father as dramatised in the *Libation Bearers*.[42] Thus, although the narrative of the omen refers to events that predate the plot, it also foreshadows events of the future ahead.

Morson in his discussion of *foreshadowing* defines omens as 'signs of the future, traces 'left' by events to come'.[43] This is valid for the omen in the *Agamemnon* as well. Additionally, Morson argues that omens can foreshadow not *the* future but *a* future.[44] In this sense, the omen operates as a *warning* rather than as a *sign* of the future (or as a sign of *a* future rather than as a sign of *the* future), while it also shows what might happen if no action is taken.[45] While the

[40] See for example *Agamemnon* 702; *Eumenides* 234, 314.

[41] Sommerstein (2008) on 155.

[42] On the arguments for this double meaning τεκνόποινος, see Schein (2009) 393 and (1982) 14; Goldhill (1984) 25; Edwards (1977) 35 and n. 32. Cf. Kyriakou (2012, 107–8 n. 30) who argues that an allusion to Orestes in τεκνόποινος here is less relevant.

[43] Morson (1994)

[44] Morson (1994) 61.

[45] Morson (1994) 69.

omen as part of the Chorus' narration of the past has a clear endpoint (sack of Troy) and medium (Iphigenia's sacrifice), the omen as foreshadowing what still lies ahead has neither. What is even more striking is that this message does not reach the characters able to avert the doom. Although Morson argues that the omens are 'instances of foreshadowing discernible from within experience',[46] in its new context, the omen lacks authoritative voice, as the members of the Chorus are only *bearers* of the warning message and not its interpreters.[47] Thus, the ominous power of the message aims for its readers and spectators as the only recipients of the *foreshadowing* technique.

The Chorus' time travel back to the launch of the Trojan expedition at Aulis draws attention to what Jonas Grethlein and Christopher Krebs call 'plupast'. In historiography 'plupast' refers to 'a past completed prior to the past that the narrator focuses on'.[48] Grethlein and Krebs note that '[t]ragedy is a special case: the actors and the chorus refer to a previous past, but the staging makes the mythical past a performative presence'.[49] In the case of the Chorus' entrance song in the *Agamemnon*, the events that predate the Trojan War are relevant not only to the present but primarily to the future of the plot. This is achieved with the help of the omen which connects past, present, and future.

Another example of how future is foreshadowed is Cassandra's prophecies in the relevant scene (1035–330).[50] These prophecies are the outcome of the uneven distribution of 'the essential surplus of knowledge',[51] which in this case is associated with just one character, Cassandra. The content of her surplus of knowledge is not identified with a generalised sense of a forthcoming doom, as the omen above is. Rather it refers to major future events, both of the near future, namely Agamemnon's death (1100–4, 1107–11, 1114–18, 1125–29, 1223–41, 1246, 1313–14) and Cassandra's death (1136–39, 1146–49, 1172, 1256–78), and of the distant future, namely Orestes' return to Argos (1280–85).[52] Unlike Calchas (and as we will see below,

[46] Morson (1994) 61, 63.

[47] Sommerstein (2010a) 17: 'The lines 134–52 are 'understood by the audience, and no doubt with hindsight by the chorus, but by no one at the time when it was uttered.'

[48] Grethlein & Krebs (2012) 1.

[49] Grethlein & Krebs (2012) 11–12.

[50] Other aspects of the 'Cassandra scene' are explored elsewhere as well: see Chapter 4 n. 40.

[51] See section 1.2 in the Introduction.

[52] For other themes included in Cassandra's prophecies, see also 4.2.4.

Proteus) who simply interprets *signs of a future* (μάντις, 201),[53] Cassandra *directly accesses a future*.[54] In Chapter 4 above, this immediacy and personal suffering which characterise Cassandra's prophetic skill were discussed as an example of how *future present* can be dramatised. In this chapter, although one could argue that *foreshadowing* and *future present* are mutually exclusive terms, I argue that Cassandra's role combines qualities of both foreshadowing and experience of the future.

While the term *foreshadowing* generally describes the chronological priority of the prophet's position (as the prefix *fore-* suggests) in relation to the events prophesied, in the case of Cassandra her position does not lie *before* but *within* the events (*future present*). This is effectively demonstrated through the references in which Cassandra prophesies her own death. As soon as Cassandra realises that she, like Agamemnon, will be murdered, she offers a series of glimpses of a future she experiences in the present: 'Cruel woman, will you take this to its end?' (1107); 'So why did you lead me here, wretch that I am— | for nothing at all, except to share dying! What else?' (1138–39); 'For myself cleaving awaits, by a blade with two sides!' (1149); 'I soon fall to Under-Earth, with my mind heated still' (1172); 'Papai! How the fire comes upon me! | Ototoi! Apollo the Wolf-god! Ah me, ah me, <the pain!>'[55] (1256–57). These examples manifest Cassandra's binary function as both agent and recipient of the prophecy. In Cassandra's case, the future does not cast its *shadow* over the present. What Cassandra experiences is the emergence of the future in the present, with all the suffering it entails for her (and Agamemnon) not as a warning, but as an actuality. Cassandra dramatises the motif of the *Oresteia* πάθει μάθος[56] in a powerful way: when her death finally takes place, she will have experienced it for a second time.

Of course, Cassandra can foretell the future in a more conventional way, in the way that Calchas and Teiresias do. This aspect of her skill works in two ways. First, Cassandra reiterates in a structurally organised speech her previous knowledge of her and

[53] And Teiresias who, for instance, knows the future in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. See Kennedy (2013) 91–92.

[54] Cassandra refers to herself as μάντις (1098, 1202, 1275), while Chorus refer to Cassandra as προφήτης (1099). For more on these terms in the 'Cassandra scene', see section under 4.2.4. See also Pillinger (2019) 30 and n. 8, n. 66. For a comparison between Calchas and Cassandra, see Pillinger (2019) 47; Schein (1982) 11–12.

[55] Sommerstein's translation (2008). See Chapter 4 n. 31.

[56] *Agamemnon* 177. For a similar meaning, see *Agamemnon* 250, 1564, 1658; *Libation Bearers* 313. For the theme of πάθει μάθος in the *Oresteia*, see Marshall (2017) 9–10; Raeburn & Thomas (2011) 86–87, 95–96.

Agamemnon's future death: 'I say that you will look upon the death of Agamemnon' (1246); 'Now I shall go to keen in the house as well,' | over my fate and over Agamemnon's (1313–14); 'now I am to die (1320); 'I pray to my last daylight from the sun, that my | master's avengers requite my murder too on our enemies' (1324–25). Second, she foretells events of the distant future, the Furies' on-going presence in the house of the Atreides (1186–90) and Orestes' homecoming (1280–85, 1323–26):

> This house **will never be abandoned** by a choir of voices in | unison, unlovely in tone because it does not tell of good. No, | and now that it has drunk human blood for greater boldness, | the revel-band **remains** in the house, **hard to expel**, of family | Furies.
>
> …there **will come** another in turn to avenge us, a | child born to kill his mother, one to exact penalty for his | father. A fugitive, a wanderer, an exile from this land he **will** | **come** home to put a coping-stone on these ruinous acts for his | family; his father thrown on his back on the ground **will bring** | him **back**.
>
> There is one speech more I wish to make—or my | own dirge: I pray to my last daylight from the sun, **that my** | **master's avengers requite my murder too on our enemies**; | mine is a slave's death, an easy victory.

As the quotes above show, Cassandra foreshadows Orestes' and the Furies' role in the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides*. While Cassandra presents a closed future for herself and Agamemnon, she promises an open future through the references to the Furies and Orestes.

Another example of prophetic speech is found in the *Eumenides* where Athena prophesies the power which the Areopagus court and the cult of Eumenides will hold in the future (681–706; 794–807, 824–36, 847–69, 968–75). As a matter of fact, this play is not often discussed in the context of proleptic narratives. For example, Goward argues that it is one of the two plays by Aeschylus that lacks major proleptic narratives.[57] However, I argue that the

[57] Goward (1999) 55. The second is *The Suppliants*.

play is preoccupied with a type of prophetic speech which, although it meets the standards of a conventional prophecy, as those found in the *Agamemnon* and elsewhere,[58] it also has aspects which challenge its associations with *foreshadowing*.

Athena outlines the eternal future of Athens in two separate scenes, one preceding Orestes' trial and one following his acquittal.[59] In her first announcement, Athena declares that the future of Athens will always encompass the Areopagus court ('Now hear my ordinance, people of Athens', 681). In her second announcement, Athena foretells that the Furies will always be respected by the Athenian citizens as the (newly established) Awesome Goddesses and in exchange for their eternal protection ('I here give you my promise, in all right', 804; 'I foretell', 852; 'Such are the things you may choose from me', 867). As both statements are articulated by a divine authority who plots out the future, they can be considered as prophetic. However, two elements suggest their atypical character. First, both announcements include a level of conditionality. Promises and ordinances are not necessarily identical to prophecy and make the future appear less certain, something which undermines Athena's omniscience. Second, unlike the type of Cassandra's prophecies which become fulfilled in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*, Athena's prophecies will not be fulfilled before the end of the narrative of the tetralogy.

While, so far, our examples of prophetic speech manifest themselves as utterances communicated by a prophetic agent, Apollo's oracle in the *Libation Bearers* allows us to look at prophecies primarily from the perspective of the recipient. As discussed in Chapter 4 above, the oracle is embedded in the narrative through Orestes' narration (and Pylades' narration).[60] This section explores how the oracle both contains and interacts with *foreshadowing*. I argue that while the oracle is expected to point to and effectively safeguard a closed future, the multiple references to Apollo's oracle can also be seen as undermining the necessity of the matricide it commands.

To start with, the initial reference to the oracle in the play (269–355) is not, strictly speaking, required by the plot and does not meet any dramatic purpose of the kind that

[58] For one more example of *foreshadowing* techniques in the *Eumenides*, see the section 5.3.2 'Prayers and oaths' that follows.

[59] For the relevant textual indicators, see section under 3.5 'Closure as possibility in the *Eumenides*'.

[60] See section 4.3.2.

Cassandra's prophecies serve in the *Agamemnon* (see above).[61] The plot has already started to build up as matricide-driven before its report by Orestes. Second, what the oracle actually orders is vague, and key elements of the oracle remain unknown to us: what was the question posed by Orestes to Apollo and what is the exact content of the oracle? It prescribes dreadful consequences (269–96), including visitations from the Furies 'exacted for a father's blood' (283–84). But do these consequences only apply in the case of failure? What about the aftermath of the matricide as the fulfilment of the oracle? How can the Furies 'exacted for a father's blood' be different from the ones exacted for a mother's blood who emerge at the end of the play and start pursuing Orestes? In this sense, Orestes' case is a 'double bind',[62] as punishment will be ensued 'both despite and because of the matricidal action'.[63] Third, Apollo's oracle is subject to the general tendency to question the reliability of oracles (556–59). This is highlighted even more due to the 'enigmatic figure'[64] of Apollo in this play. Therefore, knowing in advance the consequences of ignoring the oracle is not adequate as a determining factor for the matricide. The power of the oracle as a *foreshadowing* device gradually gives way to the rather different function as a reminder and stimulant when necessary.

Another prophecy arguably takes place in the satyr drama *Proteus* and foreshadows Menelaus' future.[65] Proteus is probably represented as in the *Odyssey* (Book 4),[66] a god with knowledge of the past and the future. In this sense he operates as the 'authoritative divine voice', similarly to Cassandra and Apollo in the previous plays.[67] Proteus' daughter Eido might also have the skill of foretelling the future (fr. 212 Εἰδώ).[68] The main storyline dramatises Menelaus' efforts to elicit information from Proteus, who is constantly changing forms, about the future. The prophecy which Menelaus receives, addresses his main concern, his return to Greece and the circumstances under which this can be successful, while it presumably situates

[61] For the position of the oracle in the play, see Goward (1999) 66.

[62] Goward (1999) 67.

[63] Goward (1999) 67.

[64] Roberts (1984) 11. This study offers a detailed analysis of the role of Apollo in the *Oresteia*.

[65] For a discussion of *Proteus* as the last play of the *Oresteia* as a tetralogy, see section under 3.6 'Closure as desire in *Proteus*'.

[66] See Introduction, n. 106.

[67] Marshall (2015) 96–97 and n. 101.

[68] It is assumed that Eido is the name of Eidothea of the *Odyssey* (4.366). Both names incorporate the quality of the beauty or knowledge.

that return within a broader context (political instability in Argos, faithfulness of Helen, Hermione's future) which transcends Menelaus' current preoccupations. By contrast to Cassandra who is both agent and recipient of her prophecy, whose skill is imposed on her and is unenviable, Proteus is represented as powerful and privileged. By contrast to Orestes whose access to Apollo's oracle appears to be without obstacles, Menelaus has to work hard to obtain the knowledge that Proteus possesses. In that way, the narrative of *Proteus* reinstates the value of foreknowledge, employs it in a celebratory and playful manner, and presents at least once how knowing the future can be really a privilege.

The examples of prophetic utterances above offer a set of cases studies for how *foreshadowing* is employed in the four plays. As I have demonstrated, the omen, the prophecies, and the oracle affirm, undermine, and transcend *foreshadowing*. The omen in the *Agamemnon* does not only maintain its power to predict future events, but it also surpasses those events to foreshadow the more distant future as dramatised in the second half of the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*. Cassandra's prophecies are also fulfilled in the near future, but they also prepare for events dramatised in the next two plays. The employment of Apollo's oracle in the *Libation Bearers* undermines the power of *foreshadowing*, as its fulfilment does not guarantee the end of Orestes' troubles at the end of the play and in the *Eumenides*. In the *Eumenides*, Athena's prophecies ordain a future beyond her control and, therefore, a future which cannot be ordained. At the end of the tetralogy, the *Proteus* reaffirms the advantage of knowing the future, but it also arguably foreshadows a future which lies beyond Menelaus' return to Greece.

5.3.2. Prayers and oaths

Prayers and oaths are mobilised by the characters' main concerns and desires for their future and are associated with *foreshadowing* in the sense that they are addressed to or approved by divine authorities (as claimed by the characters). Both prayers and oaths refer to the future by cultivating desirable future scenarios. However, they differ in the way these scenarios can be fulfilled. The fulfilment of a prayer is presented as god-induced, while the compliance with an oath is seen as depending on the character's attitude to its violation. As examples of prayers I discuss Clytemnestra's prayer to Zeus in the *Agamemnon* (973–74), Electra's, Chorus' and

Orestes' prayers in the *Libation Bearers* (1–509, 820–37, 855–68), and Pythias' prayer in the *Eumenides* (1–63). As examples of oaths I examine Clytemnestra's oaths in the *Agamemnon* (1431–47, 1569–73), Orestes' and Pylades' references to past oaths in the *Libation Bearers* (901, 977–79), and Orestes' oath for the peace treaty between Argos and Athens in the *Eumenides* (767–71). I argue that, although the prayers and oaths express the characters' need for a controlled future, their fulfilment, when it takes place, is delayed, disrupted, or exposed as a human construct.

The literary history of prayers as anticipatory devices begins in the epic poetry.[69] According to Morrison, a typical Homeric prayer consists of an introductory scene, the prayer and the divine response.[70] However, in Greek tragedy prayers remain unanswered. They are not followed by either the affirmation or the rejection of the request. Their outcome is known (if at all) only by their materialisation onstage and offstage.[71] In the examples below, the requests of the prayers are either materialised (directly after their utterance or after some time) or suspended without materialisation.

Clytemnestra's prayer to Zeus the Fulfiller[72] in the *Agamemnon* (973–74) and the prayers by Orestes, Electra, and the Chorus to Agamemnon's tomb in the *Libation Bearers* (246–509) remain unfulfilled for several hundred lines. In the first example, although Clytemnestra's prayer prepares for Agamemnon's murder, it is not followed by Zeus' approval. Although Clytemnestra's request for support by Zeus looks like (due to the god's expertise in fulfilling wishes) it can guarantee the success of her plan, and although Clytemnestra's prayer foreshadows its fulfilment as imminent, this will not be materialised for more than 350 lines. During those lines, before the first of Agamemnon's screams is heard from inside the palace (1343), we learn from Cassandra (1073–330) how Clytemnestra's careful planning and execution will finally lead to Agamemnon's murder. The second example, from the *Libation Bearers*, foreshadows the event of the matricide. Following the recognition scene (211–45), Orestes and Electra invoke Zeus (246–63), their father (315–22, 332–38, 394–99, 497–

[69] Morrison (1991) 145: '[P]rayer scenes normally provide the audience with information about the future by anticipating later episodes'.

[70] Morrison (1991) 146–49.

[71] On the matter of the unanswered prayers in Greek tragedy, see Mikalson (1989), where he argues that the single example of unanswered prayers in Aeschylus takes place in the *Suppliants* (1989, 93).

[72] For the cognates of τέλος in Clytemnestra's prayer, see section 2.2.

99), the Earth (479–80, 481–82, 489), and Persephone (490). Once again there is no divine response. Although they ask persistently for fulfilment of the prayers, there are almost 500 lines to follow before the matricide. In these lines, the construction of their plan takes place, including Orestes' hesitation to commit the crime. The volume of prayers in the first half of the play creates a strong sense of inevitability for its second half, but what follows makes clear that they *frame* the main events of the plot rather than *control* them.

The next set of examples refers to Electra's and the Chorus' prayers in the *Libation Bearers*. By contrast to prayers discussed above, these are fulfilled almost directly after their utterance. Electra, hoping for Orestes' return, addresses her dead father and prays to Hermes to increase the effectiveness of her appeal (124–63, 129–48). The Chorus, by addressing the dead Agamemnon, reiterates the need for the avenger who will set the house free again (157–63). As soon as they complete their utterances, Orestes appears and announces that Electra's prayers have been answered: 'Pray for the future and success! Tell the gods, your | prayers are now fulfilled!' (212–13). Later in the play, the Chorus pray to Zeus and, as soon as their prayer is complete (820–37, 855–68), Aegisthus' screams are heard from backstage. In both examples, the response to the prayer is direct and successful. However, it is important to note that the responses have only temporal and not causal relation to the requests. In the first case, Orestes has arrived already before Electra begins her prayers. In the second case, Aegisthus' murder is the outcome of a collaboration between Orestes, Electra, the Chorus, Cilissa, and Pylades. Therefore, the sense that the prayers foreshadow the future is undermined by the plot itself.

Pythia's prayer in the prologue of the *Eumenides* raises expectations which are not fulfilled, and so does not succeed in foreshadowing the future, featuring a request which has been left suspended.[73] More specifically, Pythia, Apollo's prophetess at Delphi, prays to a number of different divinities: Earth (1–2), Themis (2–4), Phoebe (4–7), Apollo (7–19), Athena (21), Nymphs (22–23), Dionysus (24–26), Pleistus (27), Poseidon (27), and Zeus (28–29). Through her prayer, Pythia requests reliability and effectiveness for her prophetic skill: 'And now I wish they may grant me better success by far than | at my entrances before' (30–31). The invocation of the divinities also sanctifies and solemnises the prophecy-giving procedure.

[73] For the *Eumenides*' prologue as surprise-generator, see sections under 7.3.1. 'Surprise at the beginning', 7.4.3. 'Surprise through shock'.

However, as soon as Pythia enters the temple to fulfil her role as prophetess (μάντις 29, μαντεύομαι 33), she runs out full of terror due to the presence of the Furies (34). In that way, the prayer in the beginning of the *Eumenides* undermines the possibility of *foreshadowing* and creates great uncertainty for the future.

Let us now turn to oaths. Oaths can be divided into *assertory oaths* (for the present and past) and *promissory oaths* (for the future).[74] Divine authorisation can guarantee not only that the oath will be materialised but also that its violation will incur divine wrath. In this sense, the employment of oaths points to a closed future, as compliance to the oath remains the only possibility. I argue that, although the following examples (Clytemnestra's oaths in the *Agamemnon* 1431–47, 1569–73; Orestes' and Pylades' oaths in the *Libation Bearers* 901, 977–79, 987–9; Athena's and Orestes' oath in the *Eumenides* 483–84, 489; 767–71) express the desire and prepare for a certain and specific future, they all entertain the possibility of an open future *despite* the existence of a sworn statement.

Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon* takes a *promissory* oath with regard to the future she imagines for Aegisthus and herself (1431–37):

> And now you are to hear my **oaths**, in their | full right: **I swear by Justice fulfilled for my child, by Ruin | and by the Fury**, for all of whom I slew this man, that for me | no expectation treads in fear's palace so long as fire is burned | at my hearth by Aegisthus, loyal towards me in the past; he | is no small confidence of us.

With this oath, Clytemnestra showcases her disregard of the Chorus' threats regarding her punishment in the future ('Payment in return you have still to make, and you shall be | deprived of your friends; | a blow is a pay for a blow', 1428–30). Her invocation of Justice, Ruin, and Fury, in the name of whom the oath is undertaken, creates the sense of a future planned, protected, and carefree. Additionally, this sense of security is strengthened later on, again by Clytemnestra through another oath. More specifically, she swears (ὅρκους θεμένη,

[74] Sommerstein (2014a) 1–5. On the matter of language in oaths, see Sommerstein (2014b) 76–81. For a general overview of the oaths in ancient Greek religion and culture, see Sommerstein & Torrance (2014); Mikalson (1991) 80–88.

570) for a pact with the demon of the Pleisthenids, the family curse, whereby the demon will finally leave the house (1568–73). The last lines of the play belong to Clytemnestra and are characteristic of her self-assured stance towards the future (1672–73): 'Take no account of this empty yelping! In our twin mastery of this house [I] | and you will make things [well]'. However, these words and, more significantly, her oaths, come after the Chorus' previous references to Orestes' future homecoming (1290, 1284). At the end of the play, the sense that lingers is that Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' future lies beyond their control.

Although two oaths in the *Libation Bearers* refer to the past and the present rather than the future and thus belong to the *assertory* type, their invocation serves the purpose of presenting a future once foreshadowed and now fulfilled. The first reference comes from Pylades who reminds Orestes of an oath sworn in the past by which he is bound to kill his mother ('…and the pledges sworn on oath?', 901). However, the content of the oath and the identity of the oath-taker are unclear.[75] Is it an oath by Orestes who swears to Apollo to commit the matricide, or is it Apollo who swears to protect Orestes after committing the crime? Additionally, nowhere in the *Eumenides*, where Apollo appears as a character of the play, is this oath mentioned. Orestes refers to another oath, this one sworn by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, according to which the couple exchanged vows to stay together until their death ('and their oath stays by its pledges: | they swore together upon death for my poor father, | and to die together; and here their oath holds true,' 977–79). In this case, Orestes situates the two crimes within the closed future that an oath dictates. The above examples highlight the characters' need to present their actions as embedded in a foreshadowed future.

While Clytemnestra's oath in the *Agamemnon* is outweighed by Orestes' return in the *Libation Bearers* (validation cancelled), the validation of the oaths in the *Eumenides* lies outside the parameters of the tetralogy (validation deferred).[76] Athena binds the members of the Areopagus court with the dicastic oath which will have everlasting power: '…with respect for oaths under an ordinance which I shall | lay down for all time' (483–84), '…with no transgression of their oath through unjust minds' (489).[77] Similarly, Orestes takes an oath

[75] Torrance (2015) 287–88 and n. 30.

[76] On the matter of oaths in the *Eumenides*, see Konstantinidou (2014) 6–19; Fletcher (2011) 35–69; Sommerstein (2010a) 200–9.

[77] Also 679–80 (Chorus): 'bring in your vote, strangers, with respect for your oath in | your hearts.' For more on the dicastic oath, see Sommerstein (2010b).

which guarantees the everlasting peaceful future between Athens, the city of his salvation, and Argos, his homeland (762–74).[78] The two oaths cannot be proved invalid, because their span makes the validation of their fulfilment within the plays impossible. More specifically, Orestes' oath has inconsistencies and uncertainties which cannot promise a perpetually unproblematic relation between Argos and Athens.[79] Meanwhile, Apollo bluntly asserts that oaths can be superseded by other powers such as the marriage and the will of Zeus: 'A man and wife's | marriage-bed once under destiny is greater than any oath, | with justice as its guardian' (216–18), 'an oath is in no way stronger than Zeus'(621). While Apollo argues that the oaths can be tilted,[80] Athena later on urges the jurors to maintain their oaths (708–10). The play oscillates between the idea that the oaths foreshadow a distant future and the idea that the oaths are invalid.

The prayers and the oaths, then, are associated with *foreshadowing* in the dramatic narrative in multiple ways. A prayer can affirm *foreshadowing* through its fulfilment (this is the case by Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*, and Orestes and Electra the *Libation Bearers*), while it can also undermine *foreshadowing* through the suspension of its fulfilment (Pythia's prayer in the *Eumenides*). Similarly, an oath can either affirm *foreshadowing*, when the fulfilment of the oath takes place within the narrative (Orestes's oaths in the *Libation Bearers*), or undermine *foreshadowing* when its fulfilment transcends the individual's control (Clytemnestra's oath in the *Agamemnon*) or the boundaries of the tetralogy (the jurors' and Orestes' oath in the *Eumenides*).

5.3.3. Dreams: Clytemnestra and the Furies

Similarly to the prayers and oaths, dreams are also preoccupied with the future of the plot,[81] and as such they can be seen as another way with which the characters communicate their

[78] See Torrance (2015) 282 n. 5; Konstantinidou (2014) 14 and n. 32; Torrance (2014) 150 and n. 72–73; Fletcher (2011) 67 and n. 79; Quincey (1964).

[79] For a detailed analysis of these aspects, see Torrance (2015) 291–94. On Athena's prophecy, see 5.3.1; on Orestes' oath as *future present*, see 4.4.3.

[80] Torrance (2015) 288–89, 291; Mikalson (1991) 85.

[81] See Xenophon's *On the Cavalry Commander* (9.7–9.9), where the dreams are listed as means by which the gods give signs to men. Cited by Mikalson (1991) 101. Goward (1999, 64) and Roberts (1985, 283) list prophecies and dreams under proleptic narratives.

concerns, wishes, and desires for the future.[82] As examples of dreams in the *Oresteia* I examine Clytemnestra's allegorical dream in the *Libation Bearers* (32–46, 523–39, 540–50)[83] and the Furies' admonitory dream in the *Eumenides* (94–139). Both foreshadow certain aspects of the future, mostly related to Clytemnestra's and Orestes'.[84] More specifically, I argue that Clytemnestra's dream in the *Libation Bearers* foreshadows the future with the sense of a warning. This is distinctly different from the use of dreams elsewhere in Aeschylus where dreams operate as confirmations of the impending catastrophe rather than possibilities of the future. The Furies' dream in the *Eumenides* foreshadows the future with a sense of inevitability. While both operate as confirmations of the doom and not as possibilities for the future, Clytemnestra's dream as seen in this section and elsewhere in the *Libation Bearers* is elevated into a device which, instead of foreshadowing a fixed future, works rather as a warning.

Clytemnestra's dream presents two different ideas of *foreshadowing*. First, the dream, as reported by the Chorus (32–46, 523–39) who witness the tumult in the house ('I do know, my son, for I was there', 523), is interpreted by experts in the house,[85] as sent by 'those under the earth' (40). More specifically, the dream is originated in the wrath of the dead against the killers (38–41, 538–39) and features Clytemnestra herself giving birth to a snake which attacked and hurt her during breastfeeding (527, 529, 531, 533, 535–39). Although Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon* rejects dreams as 'fancies of a drowsing mind' (275),[86] she now acknowledges the foreshadowing value of the dream. However, this foreshadowing power is received only as a warning for the future and not as something definite. For that reason, Clytemnestra seeks to take the future under her control by appeasing the wrath of the dead. The dream's ominous character foreshadows the future not in the sense of *predicting* but

[82] On the subject of dreams in ancient Greek literature, see Pigman (2019) 15–85.

[83] Clytemnestra's dream is also explored in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in relation to the concepts of: *present future* (4.3.1), *foreshadowing* (5.3.3), *suspense* (6.3.1).

[84] See also Atossa's dream in Aeschylus' *Persians* (176–330, 517–26, 215–25, 518–19) and Io's dream in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (640–72, 645–57). Goward (1999, 65) also sees a difference between the *Persians* and the *Libation Bearers*: 'But the dream here, more than the dream in *Persians*, is a slippery motif of a multiple relevance and still has an important part to play.'

[85] Line 38: κριταί; line 542: κρινεῖ. On the vocabulary of the interpretation of dreams, see Pigman (2019) 27.

[86] A similar view on the validity of dreams is expressed by the Chorus in the *Agamemnon* 420–26 and 491. In the first example, the Chorus describes Menelaus' despair who sees Helen in his dreams ('Apparitions in dreams') which, however, 'bring empty delight'. In the second, they expect to hear if the good news about Troy were true or: 'whether this joyful light which came cheated our minds like a dream'.

in the sense of *preparing* for the future. However, the final reference to Clytemnestra's dream by Orestes later in the play (540–50) reverses the idea of *foreshadowing* as described above. While the dream as experienced by Clytemnestra foreshadows a *possible* future, Orestes' interpretation of the dream foreshadows a future which for him is *fixed*.

By contrast to Clytemnestra's dream which is a subjective experience, reported by the Chorus, the Furies' dream in the *Eumenides* is an event which takes place on stage. Clytemnestra's ghost appears in their sleep to awaken them so as to pursue Orestes who has fled to Athens (94–139).[87] Clytemnestra's ghost urges the Furies with references to the past (94–116) as well as through multiple imperatives (131–39), and stimulates even more their insatiable desire for the pursuit and annihilation of Orestes as a revenge for the matricide. Although this creates a strong sense of *foreshadowing* regarding Orestes' punishment, the Furies will not pursue Orestes to the end and the dream will not come true.

In both cases, the dreams are received by the characters as *foreshadowing* the future in a certain way that soon proves to be invalid. In this sense, they illustrate what I have tried to show throughout this section which is that *foreshadowing* does not only exist within the *fulfilment* of the future but also within the *frustration* of this fulfilment. Clytemnestra perceives her dream as a warning that she can move away from, only to find out that by the end of the play it becomes fulfilled. The Furies perceive their dream as specific instructions that necessitated the punishment of Orestes, but they will soon need to come to terms with a very different future.

As examples of 'the shadow of the future in the present', prophetic speeches, prayers, oaths, and dreams do, of course, feature and entertain elements of foreknowledge; in that way, the foreshadowed future becomes fulfilled. However, they may also undermine and contradict foreknowledge; in that way, the foreshadowed future is either averted or postponed. In its both functions, *foreshadowing* (and *sideshadowing* below) cultivate effects such as *suspense* and *surprise* which will be explored in detail in the next two chapters.

[87] Mikalson leaves out from his discussion Clytemnestra's appearance in the Furies' dream (1991, 267 n. 169).

5.4. *Sideshadowing*

Moving on from the idea of *foreshadowing* which points to a future which may or may not be fulfilled, I now turn to the related but distinct question of how the dramatic narrative also accommodates the idea of a future which consists of alternative possibilities. As already discussed in 5.2, the concept of *sideshadowing* was coined by Morson who explored it in the context the Russian novel. Morson's *sideshadowing* involves modalities (e.g. 'may', 'must', 'could'), modal expressions for describing reality (e.g. 'It is possible that..'), emphasis on the personal perspective and its potentially misleading nature (e.g. 'I fancied', 'but I may not have seen rightly'), words used to express uncertainty (e.g. 'perhaps'), and other perspectives of the same event (e.g.' It is asserted', 'on the contrary', 'though', 'however').[88] As Morson argues, these techniques intend to create several possible stories, through which a whole field of possibilities appear as several *shadows* from the *side*, undermining the actual event.[89]

In this section, I offer several examples of *sideshadowing* that I group around three broad categories: nodal points, unexposed backstory, alternative futures. While, as shown above, Morson draws our attention to textual markers as indicators of *sideshadowing*, I propose three categories not only as guides for identifying the presence of *sideshadowing* in the plays (including the search for textual indicators), but also as frameworks for mapping the idea of *sideshadowing* in the plays in a more systematic way. The first category, nodal points, is useful because it shows how the narrative employs the idea of the characters' decision-making in a non-deterministic universe. The second category, the unexposed backstory, demonstrates how other paths for the (once) future are embedded in the narrative in more subtle ways. The third category, alternative futures, displays cases where an alternative future is imagined and expressed by the characters.

[88] Morson (1994) 120–22 (examples from *The Possessed*).

[89] Morson (1994) 122.

5.4.1. Nodal points

According to Christoph Bode and Felicitas Meifert-Menhard, nodes or nodal points are the essential unit and the prerequisite of any future narrative.[90] The dramatic narrative does not exemplify the pure future narrative in the way Bode and Meifert-Menhard specify. The *Oresteia* belongs to the category of 'thematic prototypes' which for Bode and Meifert-Menhard refers to texts *featuring* elements of the future such as its openness, without being exclusively preoccupied with the branching structure. I suggest that nodes are foregrounded to represent the idea of *sideshadowing* as the presence of more than one paths and, thus, can bring us closer to the idea of an open future. There are numerous nodal points throughout the tetralogy but for the purpose of this discussion I examine selectively the following: Agamemnon's dilemma (211) and Chorus' response to Agamemnon's murder cries (1348–71) in the *Agamemnon*, one set of nodes by Clytemnestra and Orestes (889–91, 899) and another node for Orestes with regard to Aegisthus' murder (571–78) in the *Libation Bearers*, and, finally, from the *Eumenides* I include one mor set of nodes, by Orestes and the Furies (744–47).

My starting point is the narrative node that can be found in the Chorus' narration of Iphigeneia's sacrifice in the *Agamemnon* (205–47).[91] This nodal point, being part of a past narrative, is reminiscent of the applications of *sideshadowing* in historiography. More specifically, the members of the Chorus act as historians who look at past events from a vantage point and recount in detail one of the most appalling chapters of the Atreides' family history. However, unlike historiography, the use of direct speech to convey Agamemnon's dilemma presents the matter not as 'solved' or 'settled', but as still ongoing (see section 5.3.1 above). Iphigenia's murder is presented as an event that belongs to a future that may or may not happen. While this future of Agamemnon's dilemma has already been past for someone who uses strict historiographical criteria, in the Chorus' tragic language is still lying ahead as unrealised. Here is how the Chorus reports Agamemnon's thoughts which form a node in respect of Artemis' mandate (206–17):

[90] See Bode (2013) e.g., 1; Meifert-Menhard (2013) e.g., 2. For the series *Narrating Futures* to which these works belong, see section 1.1.

[91] On the literary and iconographic history of Iphigenia's myth before Aeschylus, see Chapter 2 n. 36.

> 'It is a grievous doom not to comply, | and a grievous one if I am to slay my child, the delight of my house, | polluting a father's hands | with streams of a slaughtered maiden's blood close by | the altar. **Which of these options** is free from evil? | How can I become a deserter of the fleet, | losing my alliance? | That they should long with intense passion | for a sacrifice to end the winds | and for the blood of a maiden | is quite natural. May all be well!''[92]

Agamemnon is presented as divided between whether or not to comply with the goddess' ordinance.[93] The question '**Which of these options** is free from evil?' (**τί τῶνδ**᾽ἄνευ κακῶν; 211) effectively communicates Agamemnon's dilemma,[94] a nodal point in narrative terms which is formed as a bifurcation consisting of two possible paths.[95] However, despite the presence of the node, Agamemnon can be described as one with the tendency, as Morson notes in a different context, 'to trace straight lines of causality',[96] instead of embracing the different possibilities the future can bring.

The second example is an elaborate narrative node articulated by the Chorus in lines 1348–71.[97] After recapitulating in a couplet the major event which just occurred, Agamemnon's cries being heard off stage indicating his murder, they decide to make action plans. The long quote below illustrates in the most effective way this multiple narrative node which consists of twelve couplets:[98]

> -I tell you my proposal, | to have criers call the townsfolk here to the house, to help.

[92] I quote Sommerstein's translation (2008).

[93] Michelakis (2006) 23: 'The narrative focuses on the conditional nature of Artemis' anger, on Agamemnon's freedom of choice, and on Iphigenia's helplessness, which prepare the ground for Clytemnestra's subsequent justification of her own killing of Agamemnon'.

[94] For discussions on Agamemnon's decision, see Kyriakou (2012) 524–25 and n. 26 for bibliography; Conacher (1987) 76–83; Edwards (1977).

[95] Vernant (1988, 33) describes this in similar terms as 'crossroads of a choice'.

[96] Morson (1994) 119.

[97] Collard (2002, 157) argues that this is an unprecedented and unique example of the Chorus' division in the history of Greek tragedy. Taplin (1977, 393 n. 1) argues that lines 585–608 of the *Eumenides* are also distributed among the members of the Chorus.

[98] On the number of the members of the tragic Chorus, see Taplin (1977) 323 n. 3.

-No, my idea is to rush in at once | and prove the deed together with the freshly streaming sword.
-I share a proposal like that, | and I vote for action; it's a moment for no delay!
-It's here to see: this is their prelude to actions | which mean tyranny for the city.
-Yes, we are taking our time while they trample down delay's reputation, | and their hands are not asleep.
-I do not know what plan to hit on and say; | the man of action has also to plan for it.
-I' m like that too, at a loss | for words to resurrect the dead.
-Are we really to drag out our lives | in submitting like that to these violators of the house as our rulers?
-That is not tolerable, it is better to die; | it is a fate milder than tyranny.
-Why, are we to divine from the evidence of his groans | that the man is dead?
-We should be discussing this from clear knowledge; | guessing is different from knowing clearly.
-I am getting a majority from all sides for approving this course, | to know exactly how things are with the son of Atreus.

Whereas line 211 discussed above features a bi-furcation, lines 1348–71 feature a multi-furcation which is comprised by twelve different 'branches'. These branches are summarised into four distinct approaches by the members of the Chorus to Agamemnon's murder: asking for external help (1348–49), rushing into the palace to catch the murderer red-handed (1350–51, 1352–53, 1354–55, 1356–57), expressing puzzlement (1358–59, 1360–61, 1362–63, 1364–65), and pointing out the urgency to investigate the validity of their perception that Agamemnon has been murdered (1366–67, 1368–69, 1370–71). This dramatisation of the Chorus' response is not far away from a real-life human reaction to a major event, manifesting as it does different types of promptitude, bewilderment, and suspicion. The prevailing approach is that of suspicion. The sense of future openness that accompanies this discussion is immediately frustrated by the onstage appearance of Clytemnestra with the dead bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra.

The next example of *sideshadowing* comes from the *Libation Bearers* and consists of two nodal points, one expressed by Clytemnestra (889–91) and one expressed by Orestes (899), during their final encounter before the matricide (891–930). As soon as Clytemnestra finds out about the murder of Aegisthus, she seeks to create possibilities for herself (889–91):

> Someone give me an axe to slay a man, at once! | Let us see if we are to win or lose the victory! | That is where I have come to now in this evil business.

As the quote above illustrates, Clytemnestra resists Orestes' determination to close down her future options through the matricide. The nodal point featuring in the line 'Let us see if we are to win or lose the victory!' (εἰδῶμεν εἰ νικῶμεν ἢ νικώμεθα, 890), consists of two clauses featuring the same verb separated by the conjunction ἤ and demonstrates Clytemnestra's eagerness to expand the field of her possibilities. She will either be defeated or survive, after fighting for her life with a sword. This prepares for another nodal point which has to do with the question of whether or not an axe will be brought to her and, if so, by whom. As is the case with the Chorus at the end of the *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra will never have the opportunity to take action. Clytemnestra's sense of an open future is frustrated by Orestes' appearance with a sword.

Clytemnestra's and Orestes' dispute leads climactically to Orestes' hesitation to go ahead with the matricide and his address of his friend Pylades. This nodal point is employed with question (899):

> Pylades, what am I to do? Is such respect to stop me from killing my mother?

This plot twist[99] transforms the once fixed future (planned by Orestes with the help of Orestes' oracle) into an uncertain future. What Orestes is meant to do turns from a straight-line path into a forking path. Morson argues that the fulfilment of an oracle tends to be specified, whereas the path of an oracle is not. In the case of Orestes it is the fulfilment that is put into

[99] See section 6.4.3 'Suspense through action delayed' and 7.4.1 'Surprise through reversals'.

doubt through line 899.[100] What follows is Pylades' intervention which reminds Orestes of the oracle and the oath (244–45, 435–37, 540).[101] Although this temporarily restores Orestes' view of a closed future that is easier for him to actualise (900–2), the nodal point entertains in a powerful way the idea that Clytemnestra's matricide could have been avoided.

My last example from the *Libation Bearers* is the two scenarios included in Orestes' plan to kill Aegisthus. Orestes sketches out in detail the different actions involved in two separate story lines (570–78):

> But if I get | across the threshold of the outer doors and find him on my | father's throne, or if he actually comes back and speaks to me | face to face— you can be sure, as soon as I get sight of him, | before he can say, 'What country's the stranger from?', I'll | make a corpse of him; I'll cover him with blows from my swift | blade. The Fury will not be stinted of bloodshed, she will | drink pure blood to the third draught.

According to the plan, Orestes and Pylades, disguised as foreigners, will appear at the palace's door. The two alternative scenarios are as follows: Orestes gets in the palace and attacks Aegisthus who is on Agamemnon's throne (572), and alternatively Aegisthus comes and receives Orestes (573–74).[102] The alternative possibilities embedded in Orestes' plan demonstrate how any plan is subject to contingency and uncertainty. However, in both cases, death awaits Aegisthus. Unlike the nodal point of killing Clytemnestra (899), this nodal point raises expectations that are fulfilled (869).

I conclude this section by looking at a set of nodes introduced by Orestes and the Furies in the trial scene of the *Eumenides* (566–751). More specifically, after the exposition of their cases, the two parties express their anguish for the outcome of the trial which is about to be announced (744–47):

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[100] Morson (1994, 64) notes that omens and oracles project to inevitable outcomes, but they do not 'necessarily specify the path leading to [them]', because 'whatever path is chosen and whatever choices are made the omen will be fulfilled.'

[101] For the oath, see sections 5.3.2 'Prayers and oaths' above and 7.4.2 'Surprise through small-scale changes' below.

[102] Garvie (1986) on 572–76.

> ORESTES: O Phoebus Apollo! How will the issue be decided?
> FURIES: O Night, black mother! Are you seeing this?
> ORESTES: A noose is the end for me now, or (ἢ) to see the daylight!
> FURIES: Yes, and for us it is extinction, or (ἢ) maintaining our prerogatives after!

The first two lines include two questions, each addressed to a protector, Orestes' to Apollo and the Furies' to Night. The next two lines are structured around nodes marked by the conjunction ἢ which demonstrates that both paths are equally possible. For Orestes, the future will bring either death by suicide *or* salvation (νῦν ἀγχόνης μοι τέρματ᾽, ἢ φάος βλέπειν, 746).[103] For the Furies, the future will bring extinction *or* continuity (ἡμῖν γὰρ ἔρρειν, ἢ πρόσω τιμὰς νέμειν, 747). These lines highlight uncertainty as a typical feature of expectations related to the outcome of any trial. Finally, the votes are counted and found equal, an outcome which does not immediately point to a clear verdict: the equality of the votes maintains the uncertainty of *sideshadowing*. Even when this becomes resolved through Athena's intervention and Orestes' acquittal, neither of the possibilities entertained by Orestes and by the Furies in 744–47 is finally materialised.

In this section I have argued that *sideshadowing* manifests its presence in the dramatic narrative through nodal points. These point to two or more paths, of which only one is to be followed. However, the path chosen by the characters is not always materialised. In this sense, the sense of uncertainty that *sideshadowing* generates is not dissolved. In some cases, nodal points are employed to frustrate the prospect of an open future (the Chorus at the end of the *Agamemnon*, Clytemnestra in the *Libation Bearers*). In other cases, they are employed to deepen the sense of an open future (Agamemnon in the *Agamemnon*, Orestes in the *Libation Bearers*). Finally, there are cases where nodal points are employed to accommodate the sense of an open future which is maintained (Orestes and the Furies in the *Eumenides*).

[103] For the line 747 'νῦν ἀγχόνης μοι τέρματ'…', see Sommerstein (2008) n. 154.

5.4.2. Unexposed stories

Sideshadowing also takes place in the *Oresteia* in another way, namely through the presence of stories with unexposed aspects. These stories are either closely associated with the main storyline or they refer to side-stories emerging from the main narrative. In Morson's words, stories multiply 'if other 'facts' lie behind the ostensible ones'.[104] While the previous (5.4.1) and the following section (5.4.3) explore *sideshadowing* as incorporated in the narrative through nodal points and statements referring to alternative futures respectively, this section tracks down *sideshadowing* in *possibilities generated* by stories incorporated in the narrative. As examples I examine unexposed or less exposed aspects of Iphigeneia's sacrifice in the *Agamemnon*, of Iphigenia's sacrifice and Electra's role in the *Libation Bearers*, and of Orestes' future in the *Eumenides*.

Agamemnon's dilemma in the *Agamemnon* was discussed as a nodal point (5.4.1), but there are aspects of it to which we need to return. The first part of the node, the non-compliance to Artemis' ordain, raises a question which is not adequately answered: How do we know that Artemis asks for Iphigenia to be sacrificed? The narrative does not provide a sufficient answer about Artemis' anger, how this is mitigated, and how Iphigenia is involved.[105] In the following lines, the Chorus incorporate Calchas' interpretation of Artemis' mandate in direct speech (150–52):

> …in her urge for a second sacrifice, | one with no music, no feasting, an architect of feuds born in the family, | with no fear of the man.

However, the significance of the request is disproportionate to the accuracy and the validity of its exposition and justification. The quote above does not expose the reasons behind Artemis' request and does not mention Iphigenia as the selected victim. As pointed out by Fraenkel, the epithets ἄνομον and ἄδαιτον of θυσίαν may only *allude* to Iphigenia, an allusion which can only be understood by those who might know the story.[106] In a similar way, Duncan

[104] Morson (1994) 121.

[105] On the mythical account on Artemis' anger, see Fraenkel (1950, II) 97–99; Lloyd-Jones (1983). See also Furley (1986) on an analysis of different interpretations of Artemis' anger.

[106] Fraenkel (1950, II) on 153.

Kennedy discusses the ambiguities in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* which do not allow us to claim with certainty that Oedipus was the one who killed his father:

> Whether the traveller that Oedipus killed *was* Laius is never explicitly spelled out in the play, though Oedipus himself jumps to that conclusion, as do most readers and viewers: we *know* that Oedipus and married his mother, don't we? *Everybody knows*. But *how* do we know? And *why* is the play so hazy about details when, if it is the grand affirmation of prophecy, fate and a deterministic worldview it is so generally taken to be, it could surely have made everything as 'clear' as Oedipus has come to believe it is? [107]

The obscurity of Artemis' message and its interpretation continues to the next reference to Iphigeneia by the Chorus in lines 198–204:

> [W]hen too the seer cried to the chiefs | a further, more heavy means | against the bitter storm, | he named Artemis as cause, enough | for the Atreidae | to thump their staffs upon the ground | and not be able to restrain their tears.

As the lines above suggest, Artemis requests an animal sacrifice which is 'more heavy' than ordinary, without again specifying explicitly the identity of the desired victim.

A scrutiny of the second part of Agamemnon's dilemma which has to do with compliance to Artemis, also leaves certain questions unanswered. According to Agamemnon, this compliance will make him 'a deserter of his fleet losing his alliance' (210). In Sommerstein's words, 'Agamemnon puts the alternative in the worst possible light'.[108] More specifically, it is left unclear whether the military expedition to Troy cannot set out, if Agamemnon withdraws on the grounds of an immense cost such as the killing of his child. In addition, it is also unclear whether Agamemnon is obliged to his allies in a way that would bind him to accept Iphigenia's killing.[109] Furthermore, Agamemnon's use of the word θέμις

[107] Kennedy (2013) 107. Author's emphases.

[108] Sommerstein (2008) on 212 n. 46.

[109] Sommerstein (2008) on 212–13 n. 46–47. See also Sommerstein (2010c[2]) 363–65.

for the army's desire as 'natural' (217[110]) and the Chorus' reference to this as 'the yoke-strap of compulsion' which, however, Agamemnon voluntarily puts on[111] (ἐπεί δ' ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον, 218) shorten the story and raise questions of whether Iphigenia needs to be sacrificed.[112]

After the narration of Agamemnon's dilemma (206–17) and of the sacrifice (218–47), the Chorus concludes with a final reference to Iphigenia (248–49):

> What followed, I neither saw nor do I say; | but Calchas' skills did not go unfulfilled.

With this vague line the Chorus completes their narration about the past. Although the speeches of Calchas' and Agamemnon's secure accuracy and validity, what they also do is to enhance the effectiveness of *sideshadowing*. In the absence of more information to frame the speeches and to justify Iphigenia's killing, the possibility is left open for imagining a different future for Iphigenia.

The next example of *sideshadowing* also refers to Iphigenia and is found in the *Libation Bearers* (242, 255–56, 694–95). Despite their scarcity, these references bring back memories of the event of her killing and problematise its necessity. In line 242, the only one with an explicit reference to Iphigenia, she is mentioned by Electra in the prayers to their father. Iphigenia is mentioned as the sister 'who was ruthlessly sacrificed' (242). The use of the adverb νηλεῶς ('ruthlessly') is puzzling, as it sounds out of place.[113] If we receive it as a criticism of Agamemnon, it is very brief. It is also used by Electra who is 'fiercely loyal',[114] in a prayer to her father, whose loss she mourns every day. It is nevertheless a poignant reminder 'that Agamemnon was not a guiltless victim'.[115] In a less direct way, lines 255–56 return to

[110] I follow Page and Sommerstein who attribute θέμις to the army's desire to sacrifice Iphigenia. For another interpretation (based on West's correction), see Raeburn & Thomas (2011) and Collard (2002) on 217. For similar meanings of θέμις, see Sommerstein (2008) on 217 n. 48.

[111] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 218.

[112] For other references to Iphigenia in the *Agamemnon*, see 1415–20, 1525–28, 1555–58.

[113] See Brown (2018) in 242, citing Zeilin (1965, 490) and van Erp Taalman Kip (1996, 121).

[114] Brown (2018) in 242.

[115] Garvie (1986) in 242.

Agamemnon as a sacrifice (τοῦ θυτήρος) in what is an appeal by Electra and Orestes to Zeus (the question of whether or not this is *intended* by the characters as a reference to the sacrifice of Iphigenia is irrelevant to my argument).[116] Finally, at 694–95, in the context of Clytemnestra's accusations against the Curse of the house (Ἀρά, 693) which wiped out all of her dear ones (φίλων, 695), the use of the plural alludes the killing of Iphigenia.[117] These references work as reminders not only of Iphigenia's victimhood but, more importantly, of Agamemnon's guilt and of Clytemnestra's motives in killing him, whose dramatic purpose is to complicate the upcoming matricide.

Another example of *sideshadowing* that can be found in the *Libation Bearers* has to do with Electra who seems to disappear in the second half of the play. In the first half of the play, Electra has a leading role, from her (and the Chorus') arrival at the tomb of Agamemnon to the scene of the recognition and the construction of the matricide plan. More specifically, she is the one who exposes in detail the present and past life in the palace after Agamemnon's murder. She is also the one who expresses her personal sufferings and hatred towards her mother and Aegisthus (132–37, 241, 332–39, 418–22, 429–43, 444–50, 481–82, 486–88). As Peter Arnott points out, Electra's character has been built up in the first half of the play to dominate the stage, as 'we see the lurid history of the House of Atreus through her eyes'.[118] In that way, she 'helps galvanise Orestes'[119] so as for him to commit the two murders which will reinstate their positions in their father's house (243). It is in this context of being reinstated in Argos that she expects to be married (487 and perhaps 482).[120] She, then, gets inside the palace after line 584 to follow Orestes' orders: 'You must therefore now keep a good guard | upon things inside, so that all this succeeds in fitting closely | together' (579–81). Although the success of the murder plans indicates that she probably follows Orestes' orders, she never reappears and we never learn what happens to her in this or the following play(s).[121] We never learn how she receives the events of Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' murders and, more significantly,

[116] See further Garvie (1986) on 242.

[117] Collard (2002) on 695.

[118] Arnott (1989) 184–85.

[119] Marshall (2017) 96.

[120] The meaning of line 482 is the product of restoration. See Sommerstein (2008) on 482 (n. 104); Brown (2018) on 486–87.

[121] I consider lines 691–95 to be spoken by Clytemnestra rather than Electra, on the grounds outlined by Garvie (1986) in 691–95.

Orestes' pursuit by the Furies. We also never learn how Electra experiences the fact that she will have to endure more suffering as Orestes will flee again from Argos, now as a source of pollution. The aftermath of the matricide frustrates all future plans for a normal life, and, perhaps, a future marriage, in the royal house of Argos. In the case of Electra, this holds true for the *Eumenides* as well. In this play, Orestes imagines his own future, but without any reference to the sister he left behind.[122] The unexposed story of Electra's future is precisely the gap that Euripides will seek to dramatise in his plays.

I will conclude this section on *sideshadowing* with one example from the *Eumenides* which relates to Orestes' future. In his speech as an acquitted man, Orestes announces his return to Argos (754–62):[123]

> O Pallas! O saviour of | my house! You have restored me to my home when I was | deprived of my father's land. Among the Greeks they will be | saying, 'The man is again an Argive, and living on his father's | property'—thanks to Pallas, and to Loxias, and to him the | third, the Saviour, who accomplishes everything, who from | proper regard for my father's death has brought me safety, on | seeing these advocates for my mother. | Now I will go to my home…

As this quote suggests, Orestes celebrates his imminent return to Argos after many years of suffering. Finally, the house of the Atreides can hope for a brighter future. However, this desirable *nostos* is not dramatised in the play. Taplin notes that Orestes' 'purposeful, confident exit marks the reversal of his former desperation and shows his true return home in contrast to his 'return' at the beginning of *Choephoroi*.'[124] However, this sense of purpose and confidence that Taplin attributes to Orestes' exit lies only in the future *we imagine* for him. The preoccupations of the rest of the play lie elsewhere and Orestes has no role to play in them.

[122] Carroll (2007) 6. In Carroll's theory *of closure,* the early departure of a character who has dominated the stage works against closure.

[123] Orestes' speech in the *Eumenides* was also discussed earlier in this Chapter (under 5.3.2 'Prayers and oaths') and in the previous Chapter (under 4.4.3) where the focus lay on Orestes' future seen as *future present*.

[124] Taplin (2003²) 26.

His future in Argos is not *foreshadowed*. Rather, it is *sideshadowed* as a possible future which might or might not be realised.

As this section has shown, unexposed aspects of the life of the characters can feature a distinct type of *sideshadowing*. They draw our attention to futures which can be explored on the side of the main storyline. Half-told stories and discontinuities from within the plot allow us to imagine another future for Iphigenia (*Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*) and to envisage Electra's future (*Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides*). Even in the case of Orestes, his future is imagined as possible rather than certain, as it never becomes part of the dramatic plot (*Eumenides*). Although all this is not integrated in the closed universe of the plot, it nevertheless contributes to building up a wide nexus of interrelated stories.

5.4.3. Alternative futures

Another type of *sideshadowing* refers to alternative futures. These relate to narratives in which the future is imagined as being different from the future actualised in the plot.[125] Such alternative futures are the product of the distinct ways in which the characters interpret what happens to them and anticipate future events.[126] This section presents examples which are similar to the ones we have seen so far in the sense that they refer to what is only possibilities for the future, but they also differ from what we have seen so far in the sense that they foreground the 'what if?' question in a more pronounced way. As examples of alternative futures I discuss the wishful thinking of the Watchman, the Chorus, Agamemnon, and Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon* (33–35, 807–9, 599–614, and 850–54 respectively), the contrary-to-fact thinking of Orestes and Electra in the *Libation Bearers* (346–53, 363–71), and the future feared by the Furies in the *Eumenides* (490–65, 778–92, 808–22, 836–46, 869–80). In these cases, each speaker outlines alternative futures which can be realised or could have been realised in the future.

In the first play, the Watchman, the Chorus, and Agamemnon express wishes which refer to a future with Agamemnon as the king of Argos. The Watchman imagines the moment

[125] For the history of the term, see Singles (2013) 1–4. Other terms for similar preoccupations of this branch of literature are: 'alternate history,' 'alternative future,' 'alternate future'.

[126] Hau (2013) discusses this in Thucydides and Xenophon.

when he will greet Agamemnon clasping his hand: 'My real wish however, when the house's lord has come, is | to clasp his well-loved hand in mine' (34–35). With the optative mood (γένοιτο, 34), he projects to a wishful future which he constructs and vividly visualises through the image of hand-contact. This future represents an alternative version of the story as we know it, as the Watchman will never have the chance to meet his king whose life will end soon after his return. In the same context, the Chorus looks forward to Agamemnon's resumption of power, as something which will bring justice and set things in order by distinguishing the loyal citizens from the disloyal ones (807–9). Finally, a bright future is also imagined by Agamemnon, for himself and the city. In lines 844–54 of the 'Carpet scene' (783-974), he announces how his return will bring a better future for Argos, and how peace, justice, and order will dominate, using several verbal forms in future tense: βουλευσόμεθα ('we will…consult', 846), μενεῖ ('may remain', 847), πειρασόμεσθα ('we shall try', 850), δεξιώσομαι ('…to greet', 852). All the references above draw our attention to the possibility of a future in which Agamemnon will reinstate himself as the ruler of Argos.

Clytemnestra's speech before Agamemnon's return also features an example of alternative futures (587–614). As soon as she learns the news for the sack of Troy, her hopes for the accomplishment of her plan to kill Agamemnon are reignited. This enthusiasm is concealed in an announcement regarding their common future as a couple, similar to the one imagined by the Watchman and the Chorus (599–611):

> I shall learn the whole story from my lord himself; and I must | hasten to give my revered husband the best of welcomes now | he has come back. For what light of day is sweeter for a wife to | see than this, with the gates opened up when god has brought | back her husband safely from campaign? Take this message | away to my husband, to come as soon as possible; he is the | city's beloved darling. As to his wife, I wish he may find her | when he comes just as faithful in his home as the one he left | behind, the house's watch-dog true to him while hostile to ill- | wishers, and similar in everything else, with no seal broken in | the length of time…

While the lines above conceal Clytemnestra's plans, they also outline an alternative future for Agamemnon. According to these lines, she imagines their future as a couple, how she will welcome her husband, and how she will seek to learn about his adventures in the war and the sea.

A different approach to the concept of an alternative future, the one of 'counterfactuality', can be found in the *Libation Bearers*, and, more specifically, in Orestes' and Electra's prayers for their lost father (345–53, 363–71). The example consists of two wishes, one by Orestes and one by Electra, which refer to how Agamemnon's future and ultimate death could have been very different, had he not been murdered by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. With a 'contrary-to-fact' conditional (εἰ κατηναρίσθης, λιπὼν ἂν...τ'.... κτίσας ἂν εἶχες), Orestes wishes to have lost his father on the battlefield (345–53):

> If only there under Troy | some Lycian with his spear, father, | had cut you down and stripped you! | You would have bequeathed fame in your house, | founded a life for your children making eyes turn in the streets, | and in a land overseas | had your tomb heaped high, | an easy thing for your house to bear.

This alternative death of Agamemnon, instead of his dishonourable death at the hands of his wife, would bring glory to his children who would also enjoy a different life. Then, Electra also imagines an alternative future (363–71):

> Not even under Troy's walls | do I wish you had died, father, | buried near Scamander's ford | with our other folk slain by the spear! | Rather should his killers had died so,[127] laid low in fate bringing | death [to enemies], for someone | far off to find out, | unaffected by these troubles here!

Electra's wishes go even beyond Orestes' wishes. She imagines a future where Aegisthus (and maybe Clytemnestra) would have been killed without being able to affect their family.

[127] As Garvie notes, πάρος is 'rather', not 'before that happened'. This is also followed by Sommerstein (2008). For the anomalies of 363–66, 367–71, see Garvie (1986): 'it would be wrong to look for realism in what is in any case an unreal wish.'

Although set in the past, this is obviously a future if we consider how counterfactuals work: had Agamemnon's murder been avoided, Orestes and Electra would have also been able to imagine an alternative future for themselves.

As already mentioned, the scene above invites a discussion that brings side by side two critical terms: *counterfactuality* and *possible worlds*. Such a discussion offers an example of how ongoing explorations can be benefited by a future-oriented approach of the counterfactuals. According to Hilary P. Dannenberg a 'counterfactual is a hypothetical alteration in a past sequence of events that changes the events in a factual sequence in order to create a different, counterfactual outcome.'[128] In the case of Orestes and Electra, their invocations demonstrate how reality could have been different for them. However, that reality does not refer only to their past: although the counterfactual points out 'a past sequence of events' (as the definition above suggests) related to their father's murder, it is closely associated with how the two siblings think about their present and, most significantly, about their future, near and distant, foreseeable and unforeseeable. Similar discussions would open up possibilities for explorations of counterfactuals and the future elsewhere in ancient Greek literature. However, they have been largely missing from the bibliography.

One exception is the essay by Victoria Wohl who explores counterfactuals in Euripides' *Helen*.[129] Drawing on Aristotle's ideas on probability and necessity of the events within the plot, Wohl shows how the play represents and fictionalises a counterfactual history of the Trojan war by making the *improbable* look *probable*. Turning to the scene under discussion from the *Libation Bearers*, the counterfactual, although not embedded within the plot as is the case with *Helen*, is employed in a structured and perspicuous manner that again invites us to reflect on the future. In their prayers, Orestes and Electra ponder about an alternative past, while also trying to keep a balance between the actualities of Agamemnon's murder by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus on the one hand, and their wishful counterfactuals on the other hand. At the same time, characters and readers/spectators are left completely free to wonder about the alternatives in both present and future (even if such alternatives are not

[128] Dannenberg (2008) 119. The study explores counterfactuality through the development of the modern novel from the nineteenth to twenty-first century. For more about the history of the concept, see Ryan (2013, under section 3).

[129] Wohl (2014). On counterfactuals in ancient Greek thought, see also Wohl (ed.) (2014).

mentioned by the characters themselves): what kind of present and, most significantly, what kind of future would those counterfactuals be able to generate? What would be the chain events surrounding Agamemnon's glorious death in Troy or his successful resumption of power in Argos following his return? Apart from the events presented in the *apodosis* by Orestes (348–53) and by Electra (367–71), the most ground-breaking and meaningful event of the near future that could take place in the alternative 'possible world' they have constructed is the averting of the matricide.[130] Events that could happen in the distant future might include aspects of Orestes' and Electra's lives which I explored as 'unexposed stories' under section 5.4.2 above.

The final contribution to my discussion of alternative futures in the *Libation Bearers* comes from the theoretical framework of 'possible worlds',[131] whose relation with the future needs to be emphasised. Drawing on the idea of the perception of reality as being constructed by multiple distinct worlds, actual and non-actual,[132] Marie-Laure Ryan argues that the term 'possible worlds' helps us focus on counterfactuals not as events that *never happened* but as events that *could have happened*. In this light, the definition of the plot is developed as follows: 'a complex network of relations between the factual and the nonfactual, the actual and the virtual.'[133] Thus, instead of understanding Orestes' and Electra's wishes as lost opportunities which belong to the past, I argue that one needs to recognise those wishes as units of a macro-plot consisting of actualities and virtualities able to form more than one future.

Along the same lines, the significance of the future also needs to be teased out in Dannenberg's definition of a counterfactual world as 'a consciously virtual alternate version of the past world constructed in a thought experiment that asks, "What would have happened if . . . ?"'.[134] Dannenberg argues that counterfactuality is associated with the *divergence* of narrative paths (while coincidence is associated with their *convergence*). Therefore, through counterfactuality the plot expands by branching out towards a net of interrelated events. My case study of the alternative futures in the *Libation Bearers* subscribes to this observation, while

[130] See Frizzarin (2017) for a focused analysis of the morphology of the counterfactuals in the *Aeneid*.

[131] The history and the significance of the theory of 'possible worlds' have been presented by Marie-Laure Ryan in her monograph (1991) and essay (2013) [revised version of (2012) article].

[132] Ryan (2013) section 2.

[133] Ryan (2013) section 3.1.4.

[134] Dannenberg (2008) 53.

also pointing out that, beyond present and past, it is the future that accommodates all the narrative paths that are generated. Despite the tendency to identify tragic narratives with a sense of a *closed future*, the employment of Electra's and Orestes' alternative futures in the *Libation Bearers* puts forward the idea of the *open future* in the *Oresteia* as a network of possible continuations which can be simultaneously activated while reading or watching.

The final example of an alternative future I have singled out refers to a future feared, and it comes from the *Eumenides*. The Furies expose in detail a possible future which will be realised in the event of Orestes' acquittal. More specifically, before the announcement of the judicial decision (752–53), the Furies sketch out how the future world will be if Orestes is saved (490–565). In order to construct the image of the future world, they use adverbial phrases (μεταῦθις ἐν χρόνῳ 'in time hereafter', 498; ξὺν χρόνῳ 'in time, 555), and verbs in the future (e.g. συναρμόσει 'will accustom', 495; ἐφέρψει 'will…come upon', 500–1; ἐφήσω ' I shall launch', 502; σπεύσεται 'will be eager', 503; ἔπεσται 'results', 542; ἔσται 'he will be', 551) and in the optative (ἂν…οἰκτίσαιτ᾽ 'may wail in lament', 513–5; ἂν σέβοι 'would any revere…?' 525; πανώλεθρος δ᾽ οὔποτ᾽ ἂν γένοιτο 'will not fail to prosper', 552). The new world will be dominated by injustice and disrespect for parents, and the Furies will act as punishers spreading out death to the violators: 'I shall launch (ἐφήσω) every death at them' (502). Instead of a sense of conclusiveness and finality, their singing bears a sense of warning and demonstrates a future of 'what if'. Although the Furies' alternative future is not materialised with Orestes' acquittal (for reasons discussed in Chapter 4 above), it nevertheless maintains its quality as an alternative future until the end of the play and beyond.

Alternative futures, then, are introduced through characters' wishes which may or may not be fulfilled. In the *Agamemnon*, the characters imagine their future as one where Agamemnon will reinstate his position as the king of Argos, which, nevertheless, will be sabotaged by Clytemnestra's plans. In the *Libation Bearers*, Electra and Orestes present the unrealised alternatives of their father's future. Finally, in the *Eumenides*, the alternative future that the Furies outline remains an open possibility for the future.

I have argued that the idea of *sideshadowing* can be tracked down with the help of nodal points, unexposed stories, and alternative futures. In doing so, I have offered only a sample of the various ways this can take place. Nodal points can offer two narrative paths (Agamemnon in the *Agamemnon*, Orestes and Clytemnestra in the *Libation Bearers*, the Furies

in the *Eumenides*) or more than two narrative paths (the Chorus in the *Agamemnon*), with specific content and with equal chances for materialisation. The examples of unexposed stories (Electra in the *Libation Bearers*) or semi-exposed stories (Iphigenia in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*, Orestes in the *Eumenides*) are preoccupied with a future which lies outside the plot and, thus, will not be realised. Finally, alternative futures manifest themselves as possible but unfulfilled (the Watchman, the Chorus, Agamemnon and Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*), as impossible to be fulfilled (Electra and Orestes in the *Libation Bearers*), and as open possibilities (the Furies in the *Eumenides*).

5.5. Conclusion

This Chapter has focused on two of the most vividly experienced aspects of the future, its *closedness* and its *openness*, which become narratively self-evident through the techniques of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*. It has been shown that *foreshadowing* is associated with foreknowledge of a fixed future which appears within prophecies (5.3.1), prayers and oaths (5.3.2), and dreams (5.3.3). *Sideshadowing,* on the other hand, is associated with the emergence of more than one possible futures which appear either as part of the tragic narrative as nodal points (5.4.1) and alternative futures (5.4.3), or as possible continuations of unexposed stories (5.4.2). Both concepts of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* are of profound significance in my explorations of the future temporality in the *Oresteia*.

In terms of the usefulness of this terminology within discussions of the different temporalities of the future, *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* are instrumental for how to approach the future. The compound they share reveals that the future in narrative appears as a *shadow*, both as a real image and as a projection of something that lies ahead. In the case of *foreshadowing*, the shadow of the future appears *ahead of time*, while in the case of *sideshadowing* it appears *from the side*. The spatial metaphor embedded in *sideshadowing* is useful in expressing the idea of futures coexisting simultaneously.

While *foreshadowing* refers mainly to how the tragic narrative manipulates types of *foreknowledge*, *sideshadowing* refers to how the tragic narrative generates stories 'from the side' *in the absence* of foreknowledge. In the case of *foreshadowing*, these associations with

foreknowledge are put to the test, as the characters often fail to fulfil what only *they* (and not the readers and spectators) see as closed future. In the case of *sideshadowing*, any stories 'from the side' employ in a more direct way the sense of an open future which the readers and the spectators understand as sustained or frustrated.

As such, the discussion of *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* and how they generate effects related with a closed or open future prepares for what follows in the next two chapters, namely 'Suspense' and 'Surprise'.

6

Suspense

6.1. Introduction

The term 'suspense' is widely used to describe one of the most powerful elements in story-making and refers to the effect generated through our engagement with any narrative. I argue that in Aeschylus suspense is treated in a way that makes its exploration important not only for an understanding of the *Oresteia* but also for an understanding of the concept of suspense itself. As per my first argument, I contend that, by recognising the inner workings of suspense, the reader and the spectator of the *Oresteia* achieves cognitive and emotional immersion in its intricate plot. This immersion is heavily dependent on the interplay of cognitive discrepancies as the main constituent of suspense. As per my second argument, the *Oresteia* is a case study for probing the *specific* circumstances under which suspense is created. The outcome of these considerations translates into a model which can be tested on other narratives with regard to their *suspensefulness*. Thus, the concept of suspense itself can be further elucidated and refined.

Whether or not suspense is an important element of Aeschylus' dramatic technique is something that has divided scholarship. Although scholars such as Barbara Goward and A. F. Garvie have argued for the significance of suspense in Aeschylus,[1] others such as Thomas Rosenmeyer have downplayed its importance, especially when compared to Sophocles or

[1] Goward (1999) 58: 'Suspense may be Aeschylus' greatest contribution to the development of the drama.' Garvie (1976, 66) acknowledges the importance of suspense which, however, for him prevails over surprise (see next Chapter 7).

Euripides.[2] In what follows, I first seek to present some theoretical background for suspense as a popular matter in ancient and modern criticism but nevertheless under-systematised (6.2). Then, I discuss its operational modes and how they are actualised as constitutive elements of narrative. In doing so, I discuss suspense alongside two narrative modes, narrative progression (6.3) and narrative misdirection (6.4). These two sections showcase the diverse ways in which suspense is employed in Aeschylus' plays and demonstrate how Aeschylus' handling of suspense involves the readers and spectators 'in a complex hermeneutic process'.[3] This chapter takes a close look at the workings of dramatic suspense, and contributes to the broader discussion of how readers and spectators are subject to experiences which immerse them into the narrative cognitively and emotionally. This discussion will be complemented by an analysis of surprise in the next chapter.

6.2. Theoretical prelude

Outside its widespread uses in everyday language,[4] the concept of suspense acquires several definitions and interpretations from the areas of literary criticism, narratology, psychology, and film theory: from Roland Barthes' 'veritable thrilling of intelligibility',[5] to Morson's 'sign of our belief in alternative possibilities',[6] Eric Rabkin's all-inclusive definition according to which anything that takes a reader through a story is a narrative suspense element,[7] Andrew Ortony's definition of suspense as 'a Hope emotion and a Fear emotion coupled with the cognitive state of uncertainty',[8] and Alfred Hitchcock's insistence on the

[2] Rosenmeyer (1982) 323.

[3] Goward (1999) 57.

[4] The word 'suspense' is rooted in the Latin perfect participle 'suspensus' of 'suspendere' meaning 'suspended', 'hovering', 'doubtful'. Today suspense embraces several intellectual and emotional states such as 'excitement,' 'nervousness and anxiety,' 'a state of mental uncertainty,' 'a state of expectation,' 'desire for decision,' and 'pleasant excitement about an expected event.' For the complete definition, see *OED* s.v. *suspense*. On the limited usefulness of the above definitions of suspense, see Zillmann (1996) 199–200.

[5] Barthes (1977) 119.

[6] Morson (1994) 42.

[7] Rabkin (1973) e.g., 5–6, 58–60.

[8] Ortony, Clore & Collins (1988) 131.

relation between suspense and an always informed audience.[9] These ideas shed some light on the various uses and meanings of suspense and convey their allegiance to the relation between suspense and the knowledge of readers and spectators which is central in my analysis. However, for a detailed understanding of its nuances and a systematised approach of the workings of suspense in narrative, one needs to turn elsewhere.

The question of how a narrative can immerse its receivers has drawn the attention of critics since antiquity, as also seen in the Theoretical Prelude of Chapter 5. Thus, one who seeks to explore how the Greek narrative, archaic and classic, employs the involvement of readers must direct their attention to pre-modern scholarship as well.

In Aristotle's drama and rhetoric theory, although suspense is neither explicitly articulated as a specific type of readerly/ spectatorial participation nor formulated (let alone systematically scrutinised and conceptualised), relevant considerations encompass suspenseful responses as a result of the reception process. Aristotle's main idea which also works as the starting point for exploring the critic's engagement with suspense is that the readers' expectations for the upcoming events of the plot can be generated only through an artful plot. The specific components of a plot which Aristotle appreciates most as instrumental to its artfulness are the 'reversals and recognitions' (περιπέτειαι καὶ ἀναγνωρίσεις, 1450a33–34). They are described as 'tragedy's most potent means of emotional effect' and are repeatedly put forward to explain how the tragic emotions of 'pity' and 'fear' (ἔλεος, φόβος, 1449b27[10]) are generated.[11] As the Greek terms for reversal and recognition *metabasis* and *metabole* suggest, they both imply the advent of a *change* happening within a complex plot.[12] For the masterly emplotment of reversals and recognitions Aristotle sets as guidelines the elements of 'probability' and 'necessity' (τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, 1451a12–15[13]). The future events of the plot to be anticipated by the readers must be both *probable* and *necessary* to make

[9] On Hitchcock's definition of suspense, see Truffaut & Hitchcock (1962), part 19 of recorded interview (from 20:42 to 27:20). See also Beecher (2007, 255–56) who points out the difficulty of defining suspense and of deciding 'whether a study of suspense should begin in narratology or psychology'.

[10] See also 1452a38-b1 (definition of tragedy), 1452a2–3, 1452a38–1452b1, 1452b32, 1452b35, 1452b38–1453a7, 1453b1, 1453b5.

[11] Halliwell (1987) 91.

[12] See 1452a16–18 (μετάβασις for περιπέτεια and μεταβολή), 1452a21–24 (μεταβολή for περιπέτεια), 1452a28–33 (μεταβολή for ἀναγνώρισις). See also Halliwell (2002) 14 and n. 9. On references to reversal and recognition see for example: 1452a38–1452b1, 1452b8–9, 1452b38–1453a2, 1454b19–1455a20, 1456a18–20.

[13] See also 1451a38–39, 1451b9, 1452a20, 1452a23, 1452a34–35.

sense within their lives. Therefore, for Aristotle only a complex set of plot operations can be affective and only under the presence of coherent and tightly organised events that incorporate reversals and recognitions.

The second point that works complementarily to this discussion comes from the *Rhetoric*, where the phrase 'their [the listeners'] understanding not be kept in suspense' (1415a6) invites for a more explicitly articulated association of Aristotle's ideas with the modern meaning of *suspense*.[14] Similarly to what Aristotle implies with the terms 'probability' and 'necessity' in his drama theory, the critic here denounces vagueness and incomprehensibility with regard to the listeners' expectations at the beginning of a speech or poem. Aristotle's main view is that the writer must always share advance knowledge with the audience because lack of knowledge would potentially obstruct them from engaging with the narrative. As examples of poets who do inform their audiences at the beginning of their plays, the author has Euripides and Sophocles (1415a6–7), with no reference to Aeschylus. Despite etymological associations between the ancient and the modern meaning of suspense,[15] the attribution of the modern meaning of *suspense* to κρέμηται of the Greek text can be misleading: this would imply, first, Aristotle's rejection of the aesthetic effect of suspense overall, and second, its disruption by release of advance knowledge.[16] None of those can be claimed as grounded in Aristotle's thinking.

On the contrary, Aristotle's considerations above constituting the formula for a successful tragedy take into account elements closely associated with the modern concept of *suspense*. Some of these are the *succession of events in a tragic plot*, their *causal relations*, *expectations of events and their frustration, the intelligibility of the plot, and the idea of chance*, all of which I have considered to form the model presented in sections under 6.3 and 6.4 below. Although those references never formulate into explicit connections with suspense, those

[14] Bartlett's translation (2019) of the Greek ἵνα μὴ κρέμηται ἡ διάνοια.

[15] See n. 4 of this Chapter.

[16] As I will show below, although Aeschylus' prologues in the *Agamemnon*, the *Libation Bearers*, and the *Eumenides* refrain from using expository techniques, they do employ highly successful suspense-generating techniques (6.4). Although I include the *Libation Bearers*' prologue in 6.4.2, I refrain from its detailed analysis, as the text has been under extensive reconstruction. On this, see Sommestein (2008) 209–12 and n. 1; Zeitlin (1985); Garvie (1970).

connections are implied in the terms 'pity' and 'fear', pointing to ways in which the tragic narrative can engage readers and spectators.[17]

While in Aristotle suspense does not appear as a concrete idea, this becomes the case for another literary critic of antiquity, Demetrius (4th–3rd century BCE). In his work *On Style* suspense appears as a specific narrative principle and a narrative element able to secure readerly engagement. More specifically, Demetrius acknowledges the usefulness of withholding information during the plot, as this engages the readers and generates suspenseful emotions: 'keeping the reader in suspense and forcing him to share the anguish'.[18] While in Aristotle the verb κρεμῶμαι is used to emphasise only the epistemological disadvantage of the listeners, in Demetrius the term κρεμνῶντα, the participle of the verb κρεμῶμαι, signifies the immersive effect of suspense as well.

Moving on to other attested attempts at conceptualising readers' and listeners' responses in antiquity, the ancient scholiasts also employ terms which shed light on the matter of whether *suspense* is acknowledged as a primary consideration of ancient literary criticism. Overall, it is acknowledged that the writers create and increase readers' anticipation for the future of the plot via specific narrative techniques. As already mentioned in the Theoretical Prelude of Chapter 5, these techniques are regulated by and are subordinate to the orders of *oikonomia*. In this section, I will only refer to instances where direct references to ideas comparable to *suspense* are encountered. However, most of those references highlight the preoccupations of the epic rather than of the dramatic narrative towards generating *suspense*.[19] Additionally, explicit references to notions and ideas of *suspense* in Aeschylus or any other playwright are also absent.

One of the narrative techniques often commented by the ancient scholiasts which can be associated with the modern concepts of *suspense* is 'to keep in store' information (*tamieuesthai*) that would lead to premature unfolding of the plot.[20] The employment of such a

[17] See Ferrari's argument that the *Poetics* is an essay in 'which Aristotle…imagines that the tragic art can be adequately analysed as the art of suspense, whose proper pleasure derives not from increased moral understanding but from the emplotment and eventual dispelling of the play's suspense' (1999, quote from 183). By the word 'dispelling' Ferrari implies the concept of catharsis (1999, 196–97) which I leave out of my discussion.

[18] The Greek text: κρεμνῶντα τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ ἀναγκάζοντα συναγωνιᾶν (216). See Grethlein (2017) 113–15, Nünlist (2014) 167, Meijering (1987) 43–44, 198–99.

[19] See Liveley (2019) 82; Grethlein (2017) 113; Fuchs (2000) 177 n. 212.

[20] See Meijering (1987) 144.

technique as early as in the prologue was already noticed by the scholiast of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* arguing that Aeschylus postpones the climax by employing the idea of *oikonomia* via 'keeping in store' information (*tamieuomenos*) until the most favourable moment.[21] I argue below that this technique at the prologue of the *Eumenides*, which usually works contrary to audience's expectations, forms an example of *suspense* generation through narrative misdirection.[22] The second example comes from a scholion in the prologue of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, according to which the important aspects of Oedipus' story are reserved for their unfolding later in the plot.[23] More specifically, although it is Oedipus who introduces himself as the renowned Oedipus, no further reasons for this are provided, as the playwright keeps them in store for the most effective exploitation in the future.[24] In both cases, the technique of *tamieuesthai* works in support of the generation of *suspense* in the sense that the climactic release of information is retained until it produces maximum suspenseful effect.[25]

One could claim that the technique of *tamieuesthai* clashes with what Aristotle states in *Rhetoric* with regard to how much information must be released at the beginning of a work. While Aristotle argues that poets should not keep the audience in the dark, the ancient scholiasts praise the technique of reservation of information on the grounds that it can achieve the audience's immediate immersion in the plot. However, I argue that Aristotle is not concluding against the function or the usefulness of *suspense* itself, but against vagueness and incomprehensibility as conditions of an unsuccessful arrangement of the available material which jeopardise the audience's attention.

As mentioned above, the three tragic prologues of the *Oresteia* do not pursue the future through narrative progression (6.3) but through narrative misdirection (6.4), in which vagueness and incomprehensibility excite the readers' and the spectators' attention and curiosity for the forthcoming events. This aspect seems to be outside Aristotle's research interests. At the same time, *suspense* should not be solely linked to the technique of reserving

[21] Sch. on Aeschylus' *Eumenides* 1: Smith (1976, 42, 16–18).

[22] See section under 6.4.3 'Suspense through action delayed'.

[23] Sch. on Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* 8.

[24] See also Meijering (1987) 198.

[25] For more examples on the technique of *tamieuesthai*, see Nünlist (2009) 50–51. See also Nünlist (2009) 49, where this technique is discussed with relation to both *suspense* and *surprise* on the grounds that *tamieuesthai* introduces the reader/spectator into experiencing the climactic development of the plot (*suspense*), while also provides enough promise of *surprise* against monotony. See Chapter 7 on Surprise.

information. It is also the technique of releasing information which elicits suspense through references to the future of the plot or exposition of future events functioning as early hints for the ones who watch or read. I will discuss how the spectators and the readers of the *Oresteia* experience *suspense* through this technique in section under 6.3 ('Suspense and narrative progression').

Another example from the scholia which could take us towards *suspense* is related to the term *proanaphonesis*. Although this term is discussed in relation to *foreshadowing* in Chapter 5, it can here go beyond *foreshadowing* to notions of *suspense* not only as a technique but also as the effect of anticipating future events from the aspect of reading or watching.[26] The ancient scholiast of Sophocles' *Ajax* uses *prophonesis* (instead of *proanaphonesis*[27]) with references to the future of the plot: 'Such prolepses do not, by anticipating the future destroy the story, but they make the spectator attentive, because he is curious how the evil will come about.'[28]

For the purposes of this Chapter, the exploration of ancient scholia has mainly contributed to offer a broader framework of the origins and history of the concept, while also pointing out the early acknowledgment of the long-lasting effect as the main quality of suspense (by contrast to the *abruptness* of *surprise*, see Chapter 7). However, the scarce evidence of the extant scholia on drama and on Aeschylus specifically complicates any further connections with the employment of suspense in the *Oresteia*, which I set out to probe in what follows.

During the second half of the twentieth century is when the concept of *suspense* starts to attract the scholarly attention of literary critics and modern narratologists and to develop in a more systematic way as both a powerful effect and a narrative technique. In the 1980s the literary theorist Peter Brooks introduces *suspense* as a feature emerging from the design and the intended meaning of the plot.[29] Although one does not come across a complete unpacking and definition of the term, Brooks' argument that the effect of *suspense* is the favourable but strenuous outcome of an epistemological tension of the plot is enlightening. In doing so,

[26] Meijering (1987) 205–6.

[27] See Nünlist (2009) 39 n. 51.

[28] In Sophocles' *Ajax* 389c. For similar examples from the scholia in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see further Nünlist (2009) 36–39.

[29] Brooks (1984) xi.

Brooks draws on Barthes' semiotics, and, more specifically, on two out of the five codes interwoven in a narrative, the 'proairetic code' and 'hermeneutic code', implementing them as two coordinates that determine the suspensefulness of the plot.[30] Those two codes have also been mentioned in Chapter 3 with emphasis on their contribution to how we conceptualise the closural associations of the plot. What Brooks' argument brings to this Chapter is the cognisance that *suspense* is generated by the interaction between how those codes operate, and, mostly, how the 'hermeneutic code' affects the 'proairetic code' creating imbalances in the plot. While the 'proairetic code' emphasise the happenings of the plot, the 'hermeneutic code' creates the 'space of suspense' through which the reader is navigated to the fulness of meaning, through 'partial revelations and misleading clues'.[31] The idea of *suspense* evolving from the plot marks a significant step towards the ways one can delve into its properties. Those ways for the study of suspense in this thesis are narrative progression (6.3) and narrative misdirection (6.4).

Before I move on to more targeted studies on *narrative suspense*, it is worth mentioning that *suspense* as an independent topic receives increased scholarly attention in the 1990s with the edited volume *Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Approaches* by Peter Vorderer, Hans J. Wulff, and Mike Friedrichsen.[32] In this collective study, *suspense* is put forward, analysed, and discussed from different perspectives, angles, and schools of thought, as the recommended way of grasping its qualities more efficiently. It is in this inclusivity and diversification where the usefulness of this study lies. *Suspense* is suggested to be approached both at its production in various types of narratives (film, poetry, theatrical play) and through its experience by their receivers.[33] For example, some essays are more focused on a reader-oriented approach (Wullf, Mikos, Vorderer, Mattenclott, Zillman, de Wied), others on the narrative-oriented features of suspense (Leonard, Wuss, Cupchik), while others discuss the issue of whether and how suspense can be present on rereading (Carroll, Gerrig, and Brewer). What brings those essays together is the appreciation that suspense

[30] Brooks (1984) 19. See also Brooks' definition of the plot (1984, 18, 287): 'Plot, we suggested, might best be conceived as a combination of the proairetic and the hermeneutic, or better, an overcoding of the proairetic by the hermeneutic.'

[31] Brooks (1984) 169.

[32] Henceforth, Vorderer et al. (1996).

[33] Vorderer et al. (1996) 14.

needs to be studied as both a narrative element and an experience in the context of framing expectations for the future.[34] This type of approach also traverses the current chapter.

Two scholars that refer to *suspense* in narrative terms, associating it with cognitive discrepancies generated by the plot are Seymour Chatman and Mieke Bal. Chatman defines suspense as 'a particularly intense kind of narrative curiosity which stimulates an unusually strong expectation of possible consequences'.[35] This definition warmly invites one to study suspense within the complex dynamics of the plot, as they are determined by the interaction of different types of events.[36] While the *kernels* are the logically essential events for the story, the *satellites* are important for the aesthetics of the narrative and they elaborate and complete the *kernels* in a way that makes reading and spectating a striking experience.[37] With a focus on the reception process, Bal distinguishes suspense into four types on the basis of the reader's and character's knowledge which is manipulated by the focaliser.[38] More specifically, the reader and the character may have equal possibilities of knowledge or ignorance: in suspense types 1 and 4 they *both* share knowledge *or* ignorance , while in suspense types 2 and 3 their epistemological statuses differ substantially.

Two other, interrelated, models of *narrative suspense* which have influenced my analysis in a more direct way are those by Meir Sternberg and by Raphaël Baroni. Both models situate suspense at the centre of their analysis of 'narrativity' (Sternberg) and of 'narrative tension' (Baroni). Sternberg defines suspense as the 'expectant relentless and tentative hypotheses that derive from lack of information' and links it to the lack of desired information concerning the outcome of a dramatic conflict.[39] Baroni focuses on suspense as an element of narrative tension and divides it into several categories, among which the most useful ones for my purposes are *suspense par anticipation*, the suspense where the anticipation refers to an unknown end, and *suspense moyen*, where the anticipation refers not to the end, which is known, but to *how* this end will be reached.[40]

[34] Liveley (2017) 8.

[35] Chatman (1993) 21.

[36] Chatman (1978) 32, 54.

[37] Chatman (1978) 54.

[38] Bal (1985) 148.

[39] Sternberg (1978) 65.

[40] Baroni (2007) 269–95.

One final addition to the theoretical background of this chapter has to do with the *paradox of suspense*. According to Manfred Pfister, suspense is a technical quality that lies *within* the text but awaits the participation of the audience to actualise its effect.[41] This so-called *potentiality of suspense* assumes a series of parameters, a system of *pragmatics*, that achieve its realisation *outside* the text, where *levels of attention*, *reception context*, *conditions of performance*, and other factors define the reception process. Despite the rigid specifications of Pfister's framework, his approach considers the reception of the dramatic narrative as the *conditio sine qua non* for the generation of suspense, a condition which is at the core of this chapter. In the same context, discussions of 'the paradox of suspense' by Noel Carroll and Aaron Smuts,[42] 'anomalous suspense' by Richard Gerrig,[43] and Baroni's '*suspense paradoxal*'[44] conceptualise how suspense can exist despite conditions of re-reading and re-watching. This is fully in line with Ricoeur's mimesis 3, the model I adopted throughout my dissertation. According to Ricoeur, the experience of suspense through the cognitive process from an imperfect or partial knowledge to clarity is independent from knowledge of how the story in fact will turn out.

The amount of scholarly work which has dealt with the effect of suspense in Greek tragedy does not do justice to the value of the concept of suspense as a main conceptualisation of how we respond to tragic narratives. More specifically, suspense in Aeschylus has been discussed in a very limited scale.[45] For example, Goward's discussion is useful and illuminating but it lacks detailed analysis,[46] while K. Paul Bednarowski restricts his discussion of suspense in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Suppliants* to suspense as an effect only relevant to the original audience, whose prior knowledge is taken for granted. Additionally, Bednarowski discusses suspense in relation to issues of characterisation.[47] As for more general studies, Francis Dunn discusses suspense in the context of the shift of interest from the past to the present (while I argue that our preoccupation with suspense is related to our uncertainty

[41] Pfister (1988) 98–102.

[42] Carroll (2001) 254–70; Smuts (2008a), (2008b).

[43] Gerrig (1989a), (1989b).

[44] Baroni (2007) 279–95.

[45] For other studies on suspense in Greek and Roman drama, see Monti-Pouagare in Sophocles (1988); Hamilton (1978) in Euripides; Pratt (1939) in Seneca; Duckworth (1942) in Plautus; Flint (1922); Stuart (1918) in Euripides; Moriarty (1911).

[46] Goward (1999) e.g., 57–60, (2005) 47–51.

[47] Bednarowski (2015) and (2010).

about the future), and he limits himself to suspense only through narrative delay.[48] Ohlander focuses on Euripides and shows how suspense is relevant to the author's audience, which is limiting.[49] The only exception is a comprehensive study of dramatic suspense in Greek tragedy, with emphasis on Euripides, by Andreas Fuchs.[50] Fuchs distinguishes three individual categories of suspense, the knowledge category, the emotion category, and the time category. Although he does not focus on Aeschylus, Fuchs is useful because he discusses suspense from the lens of literary theory, ancient and modern, offering a critical framework which is not wholly defined by the issue of historical specificity.[51]

In what follows, I show how suspense manifests itself in the four plays as generated through narrative progression and narrative misdirection which represent two main narrative movements of the plot associated with the distribution of knowledge.

6.3. Suspense and narrative progression

This section deals with how suspense is generated within conditions of *narrative progression*. Or, to put it another way, how narrative progression creates suspense. By narrative progression I mean the forward direction of the plot towards its ending, or as Phelan notes, 'progression refers to a narrative event, one that must move through time'.[52] The audience's and readers' expectations are generated while the plot unfolds through three different approaches to the distribution, handling, and treatment of knowledge. While the first section looks at how foreknowledge as a dramatic technique produces suspense (6.3.1), the second section focuses on suspense as the outcome of the eventfulness of the plot (6.3.2). The third section looks at suspense in relation to exposition of information regarding the future (6.3.3).

[48] Dunn (2007) 96–98.

[49] Ohlander (1989).

[50] Fuchs (2000). He briefly refers to Aeschylus' *Suppliants* as a case study for narrative suspense (2000, 314–17).

[51] Fuchs (2000) 128.

[52] Phelan (2002, 211–12) argues that narratives *progress* through 'instabilities' (within a story) and through 'tensions' (within discourse). The second term reflects my approach in this chapter. For a focused study on narrative progression and its employment within short stories, see Toolan (2009).

6.3.1. Suspense through foreknowledge

As mentioned in the theoretical prelude, foreknowledge and foreshadowing create anticipation and anticipation creates suspense. This is central to what ancient critics say about epic and tragedy.[53] In this section I explore two examples of foreshadowing that provide the readers and spectators with foreknowledge and create expectations for them to be fulfilled: Cassandra's prophecies in the relevant scene in the *Agamemnon* and Clytemnestra's dream in the *Libation Bearers*.[54] There are no examples from the *Eumenides* in this section. As will be demonstrated below, suspense within narrative progression in the *Eumenides* is generated through action (6.3.2).[55]

The Cassandra scene (1072–333) is significant for generating *intense* suspense as it meets Pfister's main criterion, the 'quantity and clarity of the future-orientated information'.[56] The main events which are prophesied are the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra by a woman who turns out to be Clytemnestra (1107–11, 1114–18, 1125–29, 1136–39). The unfolding of the future starts at line 1100, where the phrase 'new affliction' captures the readers' and spectators' attention (νέον ἄχος, 1101). Apart from the newness of this affliction, it is also its proximity ('is plotting here in the house', 1102) and its extent, intensity, and irreversibility ('great evil', unbearable for kin', 'difficult to heal') that maximise suspense. In the next lines Cassandra discloses the actual content of the upcoming disaster: it is a murder which will be executed by a woman against her husband ('Cruel woman, will you take this to its end? | After you bathe the husband clean | who shares your bed…', 1107–9). By using a net as a trap to murder him ('the trap-net sharing his bed, sharing guilt for his blood', 1116–17), she is striking him dead while bathing ('she strikes; he falls in the vessel's water', 1128). Cassandra soon realises that a second murder will take place as well, her own murder at 1136–39 (and

[53] See Grethlein (2017) 114, on scholia on *Iliad* 11 and Sophocles' *Ajax*; Nünlist (2014) 174. On the presence of *prolepsis* in the ancient scholia, see also n. 10 in Chapter 5. For a discussion of these elements in the archaic epic narrative, see Rengakos (2005) & (1999); Meijering (1987); Duckworth (1934).

[54] The 'Cassandra scene' features other elements which create suspense, irony (6.4.2) and action delayed (6.4.3), as conditions of narrative misdirection (6.4).

[55] There are two more prophecies in the tetralogy, Athena's in the *Eumenides* and, probably, Proteus' in *Proteus*, which are discussed in 5.3.1 as *foreshadowing* techniques. I do not include them here as they both refer to a future which will not be fulfilled in the course of the plots.

[56] Pfister (1988) 99–100. Pfister also enlists open discussion of dreams. See also section under 5.3.3. 'Dreams: Clytemnestra and the Furies'.

then 1149, 1156–61, 1172).[57] The peak of her report comes with the revelation of the identity of the murderer and the nature of the deed, and leads to an explicit reference to Agamemnon's murder by his wife (1223–45, and then 1246, 1256–78). Finally, before her departure from the stage, Cassandra summarises in one line what will follow: 'Now I shall go to keen in the house as well, | over my fate and over Agamemnon's' (1313–14). This detailed presentation contributes to the readers' and the spectators' foreknowledge and maximise their anticipation to see *how* this foreknowledge will materialise. The matter of how Cassandra's attempts fail to reach her internal audience will be explored as part of the section of narrative misdirection and, more specifically, of suspense through irony (6.4.2).

My second example of how suspense can be built up through foreknowledge is Clytemnestra's dream in the *Libation Bearers* (32–41). Dreams as foreshadowing narratives, contribute to foreknowledge and generate suspense.[58] For instance, Pfister lists dreams among the narratives through which 'future-orientated information is transmitted'.[59] Although lines 34–41 offer limited access to the content of the dream, and we will have to wait until line 523 for the Chorus to reveal it, I argue that this is an example of suspense through foreknowledge and not of 'suspense through withholding information' (as discussed below in 6.4.1). Its position at the very beginning of the play provides the foreknowledge which the readers and spectators require to anticipate its future materialisation.

After the appearance of Orestes in the prologue of the *Libation Bearers* (1–21), Clytemnestra's dream in the parodos (22–83) complicates the plot by releasing information gradually. There are at least four stages in that process. First, the Chorus do not reveal their presence as bearers of libations at the tomb of Agamemnon until the second strophe (32–41). Second, neither the content of the 'prophetic dream' (ὀνειρόμαντις, 33) nor the identity of the one who had it are immediately apparent. Although the dream is identified through the adjective τορός as 'clear'[60] (also first word of the line), there is no clarity in the manner it is communicated by the Chorus. What we have in this strophe is only the response of the yet-

[57] On the murder weapon, see Collard (2002) in 1149.

[58] For dreams as *foreshadowing* techniques, see section 5.3.3.

[59] Pfister (1988) 100.

[60] I opt for Sommerstein's translation (2008) of τορός as 'clear', instead of Collard's (2002) as '[p]iercing and shrill'. See similar meaning of τορός in *Agamemnon* 254, 616, 632, 1062, 1162, 1564. Garvie (1986 in 32–6) notes that τορός 'suggests both the piercing nature of the cry and the clarity of its message'.

to-be identified person who had the dream, who 'yelled screaming at full dead of night | in terror from the inmost house, | falling heavy on the women's chambers' (34–36). The next piece of information to be released is that the dream was immediately communicated to the interpreters of the house who decoded it as a message of a powerful portent of the wrath of the dead against the killers (41). The final piece of important information comes in the next strophe (42–53), where the Chorus reveals the identity of the individual that had this dream and their own attitude towards them. The phrase 'godless woman' (46) alludes to the female protagonist of the play, 'the first direct reference to Clytemnestra in the play.'[61] The Chorus' account of the current situation in the palace (50–54) reaches a climax with the phrase 'through the death of its master' which sheds light on the previous reference in line 41 to the wrath of the dead against the killers. So far the readers and the spectators have collected foreknowledge which forces them to anticipate with suspense what is coming: a) The Chorus appeases the dead Agamemnon with offerings on behalf of a hateful woman, Clytemnestra; b) Clytemnestra wants to appease the chthonic powers and to avert the future which her nightmare foreshadowed; c) this event is also situated in the broader context of the familial crimes of the past (as narrated and seen in the *Agamemnon*) and of the future as anticipated. Although what we have here is not a detailed narrative of the content of the dream itself, I argue that lines 22–54 provide *references* to Clytemnestra's dream which build suspense in a powerful way. Although these references do not fully disclose the content of the dream, they nevertheless come across as foreshadowing the future. By contrast to this passage where the dream contributes to foreknowledge, in lines 514–53 its operation as foreknowledge is suspended and substituted with its manipulation by Orestes.[62]

In this section, I have demonstrated how suspense can be built through narrative progression and, more specifically, through foreknowledge which is distributed to readers and spectators through prophecy and dream. The expectations that Cassandra's prophecies and Clytemnestra's dream raise have to do not with the *if* (Baroni's *suspense par anticipation*) but with the *how* their content will be fulfilled (Baroni's *suspense moyen*). In both cases, of the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra and Clytemnestra's matricide, the suspenseful state with which readers and viewers anticipate the future events lies within the tension between

[61] Garvie (1986) in 43–6.

[62] This was discussed in section 4.3.1.

the certainty that something will happen and the ignorance about the circumstances under which this will be materialised.

6.3.2. Suspense through action

Another element which is pertinent to narrative progression and contributes to the generation of suspense by pulling the story forward is action. The key elements of this type of suspense have to do with the fast pace and unpredictability of the unfolding plot, both products of narrative tension.[63] Here I use as examples the scene with Cilissa in the *Libation Bearers* (730–82) and the trial scene of Orestes and the Furies in the *Eumenides* (576–680). I will also discuss briefly how Menelaus' escape from Egypt in *Proteus* could have been a suspenseful scene. I do not include examples from the *Agamemnon*, as I argue that suspense through narrative progression in that play is based on foreknowledge (6.3.1) and on exposition of future planning (6.3.3).

While the first part of the *Libation Bearers* provides limited action and the plot moves forward rather slowly, the scene of Cilissa demonstrates that in the second part of the play the story unfolds at a much higher speed and with a clearer sense of direction, featuring 'tensed action' and 'a rallying plot'.[64] In this respect, Halleran notes that '[t]he almost frenetic pace of this section of the play reflects the intensity of the action (Orestes is moving toward matricide) and stands in sharp contrast to the static, ritual-filled first half of the drama.'[65] Although Dunn points out that '[s]uspense of this sort—uncertainty or anxiety as real alternatives loom—is a Euripidean novelty that serves, among other things, to draw attention to present possibilities,'[66] I argue that in the examples discussed here suspense is *already* the result of lack of foreknowledge.

[63] Dunn (2007, 86) uses the term 'accident' to describe the action in the play and argues that none of Aeschylus' plays are as 'busy' as Euripides'. Although this might be valid, the action in Aeschylus is not related to how busy a plot can be with many happenings, but to how scenes with action have significant dramatic purpose and effect.

[64] Rosenmeyer (1982) 311–12.

[65] Halleran (2005) 168.

[66] Dunn (2007) 92.

Cilissa and the Chorus are the protagonists of a deception which targets Aegisthusand maximises suspense because it accelerates the materialisation of his murder.[67] Cilissa is on her way to Aegisthus to deliver the message about the arrival of the two visitors, unaware herself of the true identity of the foreigners, and about the news of Orestes' death (734–43), for which she is devastated (743–65). Just before she departs, the Chorus asks two consecutive questions (766, 768), through which they extract the information that Aegisthus will arrive with his armed servants (769), following Clytemnestra's orders. Instead of allowing Cilissa to deliver Clytemnestra's original message, they instruct her to deliver an alternative message (770–73):

> Then don't make that your message to our hated master, | but bid him with a cheerful heart, so that he hears without being frightened, | to come by himself as soon as he can. | It depends on the messenger to make bent words succeed.

The Chorus acts like a playwright and a director who must secure that there are no loose ends to the plot towards the anticipated event which is the murder of Aegisthus. The two main points of the new message refer to Aegisthus' appearance on stage: he must come 'by himself' and 'as soon as he can'. This combined action aims to save Orestes' plan and give him back control of the events leading to the matricide. However, the success of Cilissa's new task cannot be guaranteed yet, and its outcome will remain unknown until Aegisthus' entrance in line 838. This scene illustrates what Sternberg argues for suspense: it is 'rooted in the enactment of humanity's free will'.[68]

One of the main characteristics of the *Eumenides* is its fast-changing temporal and spatial setting. While Orestes has been persecuted from Argos to Delphi (1–93) and, then, sent by Apollo to Athens (235–777), Clytemnestra's ghost urges the Furies to hunt him down (94–142). This can be seen as a manhunt, an organised search for someone charged with a crime. Like in a modern adventure film, the frequent change of time and space can keep suspense going, because there is a sense of motion and unpredictability, conditions associated with dynamic change. This is seen most clearly in the trial scene (576–753), where the narrative is

[67] Goward (1999, 14) sees this as the mirror scene to the 'Carpet scene', as both deceive and lead to the off-stage murder.

[68] Sternberg (2003) 593.

dominated by the tension between Apollo and the Furies, as opposed and equally fierce powers. Their first encounter (179–234) has already generated anticipation for this second encounter. Until the announcement of the final decision of Orestes' acquittal (752–53), the two sides appear equally justified in their claims for and against Orestes' matricide. Apollo appears as witness (μαρτύρησων, 576) and responsible for the matricide which Orestes committed (αἰτίαν δ'ἔχω, 579). The Furies appear as the prosecutors (διώκων, 583) who are instructed by Athena to present the case (ὀρθός πράγματος διδάσκαλος, 584). Then, a stichomythia of nineteen lines between Orestes and the Chorus increases the suspense as Orestes' guilt appears undeniable (588–606). Apollo testifies on behalf of Orestes (μαρτύρησον, 609) on the grounds of the justice of his crime (614–21, 625–39, 644–51), while the Furies fight back (622–24, 640–43, 652–56). Their speeches are followed by Athena's order to the judges to vote over the case (674–75). This climactic moment reaches its peak through the actual process of voting, while Apollo and the Furies continue to challenge each other's arguments. Although the announcement of Orestes' acquittal (752–53) meets the readers' and the spectators' expectations, these have been building up in a powerful way for roughly 200 lines.[69]

It is plausible to assume that there were action scenes in *Proteus*, aimed at provoking suspense. These scenes are likely to have dramatised eventful events such as Menelaus' efforts to captivate Proteus and to escape from Egypt. In the first example, the audience's suspense must have been the outcome of their anticipation for Proteus' prophecies which would facilitate Menelaus' return to Greece. In the second example, Menelaus' escape from Egypt, there are two fragments that are possibly relevant. In fragment 213 the adjective 'unpursuable' in the plural (ἄεπτοι), may have described those escaping Proteus, thereby suggesting that Menelaus was not alone and must have had his companions and Helen. In fragment 214 the word 'ship' (ἀμάδα) may well suggest the means of Menelaus' escape.[70] We can therefore argue that the narrative of *Proteus* must have invited spectators to experience another type of suspense which is related to adventure rather than tragic catastrophe.

[69] Taplin (2003²) 45.

[70] Marshall (2015) 84 and n. 95.

In this section, I have shown how narrative tension and suspense are generated by two mutually reinforcing elements of narrative progression: fast pace and unpredictability. In the *Libation Bearers*, the Chorus and Cilissa participate in a scene whose fast development generates suspense, not through surprise or frustration of expectations, but through enhancing anticipation for Aegisthus' death. In the *Eumenides*, the scene of Orestes' trial employs quick exchanges which generate suspense through the tension and conflict of a courtroom.

6.3.3. Suspense through the exposition of future planning

The concept of exposition is central to dramatic and narrative theory and is mainly related to how the background of the story is presented in order to introduce readers and spectators 'into an unfamiliar world.'[71] In my analysis, exposition is associated not with the past but with the future, and, more specifically, with the accounts that characters provide of their future plans. Those accounts offer the construction of a future with specific content and build up expectations for its materialisation. In Sternberg' words:

> All ''plans'' or ''purposes'' bear on what will happen, and to this extent, their enactment necessarily involves a suspenseful advance for the agent, possibly also for the reader, toward the yet unborn eventuality, humanly unknowable beforehand.[72]

The quote above is in line with Pfister's interpretation of exposition as a narrative which 'can be part of a more dynamic situation that is already moving towards an as yet unknown future'.[73] While 'Suspense through foreknowledge' (6.3.1) deals with how information related to characters' future is distributed to the readers and the audience through the dramatic techniques of prophecy and dream, this section presents how similar, future-oriented information is accommodated within the narrative through the delivery of future planning by

[71] Sternberg (1978) 1. On bibliography of exposition in drama see Pfister (1988) 86 n. 58.

[72] Sternberg (2003b) 532.

[73] Pfister (1988) 100.

the characters themselves. The difference between the type of suspense discussed in 6.3.1 and the one discussed in this section lies in the fact that the former is shaped by the tension between the uncertainty of the future and the reliability of the information coming from divine intervention (prophecy, dream), while the latter is shaped by the tension between the uncertainty of the future and the characters' purposeful planning. As both types develop through narrative progression, our expectations are not frustrated but developed and heightened.

I offer examples of characters' exposition of future planning which do not limit themselves to the beginning of the plot.[74] In what follows I look at Orestes' and Electra's prayers (306–509) and Orestes' murder plan in the *Libation Bearers* (554–84), and Apollo's plans in the *Eumenides* (64–93). I do not offer examples from the *Agamemnon* for two reasons. First, the expository mode (as the characters' exposition of future planning and not the past[75]) is not the main mode of presentation of future events in this play, and, second, the generation of suspense in the *Agamemnon* lies within other ways of creating anticipation, namely through foreknowledge (6.3.1),[76] through withholding information (see below 6.4.1), through irony (see below 6.4.2), and through action delayed (see below 6.4.3). The following examples illustrate how suspense can be provoked under the influence of the characters' expositions and in anticipation for how those expositions will materialise.

In the *Libation Bearers* we witness how Orestes' and Electra's prayers are gradually transformed into a matricide plan which heightens our suspense for the upcoming revenge. In those lines (kommos 306–578), Orestes and Electra, accompanied by the Chorus, immerse themselves into a ritual of plotting revenge against the killers of their father by asking his aid. The rituals slow down the pace of the plot, creating the space within which the decision of the matricide will take shape for the first time. In lines 375–77, the nature of the revenge starts to become clear: 'Yet here is the thud of a double lash coming: | Orestes has helpers below earth already, | and our rulers' hands are impure.' In lines 418–22 and 429–33, Electra expresses her

[74] Pfister (1988, 86) notes that the exposition must not be restricted to the beginning of the play. See also Pfister (1988) 90–91, 74–75. For an introduction to the matter of exposition in Greek tragedy and with an emphasis on Aeschylus, see Spring (1917). However, it restricts its analysis to the meaning of exposition as account of the past instead of account for the future.

[75] Examples of exposition as the recount of the past in the *Agamemnon* are the Chorus' account of Iphigenia's sacrifice (122–249) and the Herald's account of Menelaus' catastrophe (636–80).

[76] Such as Cassandra's prophecy, discussed above.

hatred against her mother and, in doing so, facilitates Orestes' announcement: 'For my father's dishonour she shall pay, then, | with the aid of the gods | and with the aid of my own hands', (435–37). Some lines later, his determination to commit the deed is clearly articulated: 'It shall be done' (514).[77] Then, the Chorus' reference to the dream strengthens in the most efficient way Orestes' and Electra's desire to kill their mother. The completion of this scene finds the readers and spectators prepared for, and, at the same time, full of suspense and apprehension for, what is follow.

In the second example, we witness Orestes' detailed exposition of the plan of Aegisthus' murder (554–84) which increases our suspense even more in the expectation of a second murder to take place in the near future. Orestes begins the delivery of the plan with the phrase 'It's simply said' (554) and, then, outlines its details through a sequence of future tenses: 'I shall come (ἥξω) in the guise of a stranger...' (561), 'we shall both of us speak (ἥσομεν) Parnassian…' (563), 'we shall wait (μενοῦμεν) as we are' (567). The final lines include the ultimate stage of the plan (571–78):

> Well, anyway, if I do get past (ἀμείψω) the threshold of the front door | and find him (εὑρήσω) on my father's throne, | or if he arrives home and then speaks (ἐρεῖ) to me face to face, | then I assure you, as soon as I set eyes on him, | before he can say 'where's the visitor from?' I 'll make a corpse of him (νεκρὸν θήσω), | draping him round my swift sword; | and the Fury, who has had no shortage of gore, | will drink a third draught of unmixed blood.

Here suspense is the result of the tension between our preparation for the future and the uncertainty of how that future will materialise. We will have to wait until line 838, when Orestes' second alternative is the one that takes place. The additional complication that Aegisthus is out of the palace and, thus, needs to be called back, is what Cilissa allows to happen with the crucial intervention from the Chorus (explored in 6.3.2).

My final example comes from the *Eumenides*, where Apollo offers an overview of the plot (64–93), without, however, the foresight and certainty of a prophet, leading to the

[77] Garvie (1986) on 306–478: 'The ritual appeal to Agamemnon serves as the setting for Orestes' vital decision.'

growing anticipation of the events to come. First, Apollo declares that he will support Orestes until the end and will fight his enemies ('I will not betray you, no; and through to the end I will | be your guard in standing near you, but also when I stand far | off; I will not be gentle with your enemies', 64–66). He then instructs him to leave Delphi, where Orestes has resorted while pursued by the Furies (74). The point of Orestes' destination must be Athens (81–83):

> and there we shall have judges for this | matter, and words to win them over,
> and find means to release | you once and for all from these miseries.

This overview sheds light to the turns and twists of the plot of the *Eumenides*, while also activates the readers' and the spectators' imagination about how all this will take place leading to Orestes' acquittal. It does, of course, also contribute to surprise through narrative misdirection as I discuss in 7.4.1, as it prepares for the plot only until line 777, but for the purposes of this discussion its significance lies not in what it withholds but in the many narrative leads it offers.

The examples I have offered in the discussion of how suspense is created through exposition of the characters' future planning show that large amounts of information do not necessarily lead to the kind of certainty that could potentially undermine suspense. The prior knowledge of the matricide and of Aegisthus' murder in the *Libation Bearers*, and Orestes' transition from persecution to acquittal in the *Eumenides* are all *in line with* our expectations. However, suspense is raised by the fact that the future is still opaque and not fully determined.

6.4. Suspense and narrative misdirection

While the whole of 6.3 was structured around the question of how suspense is provoked through *narrative progression* and distribution of information, this section explores the generation of suspense as an outcome of *narrative misdirection* where the distributed information comes to be undermined. I argue that this is employed within the narrative through three distinctive techniques: withholding information (6.4.1), irony (6.4.2), and action delayed (6.4.3). All three techniques frustrate the readers' and the viewers' expectations for

what is to come. The concept of narrative misdirection in classical scholarship in general was first employed by James Morrison who examines cases of misdirection in the *Iliad*.[78]

Narrative misdirection in Greek tragedy has been mostly associated with Euripides' plays, while Aeschylus' plays have received limited critical attention in this respect.[79] For example, Dunn argues that [t]he device of leading the plot down a certain course only to reveal belatedly that this was a blind alley is typically Euripidean', while '[b]y contrast, in Aeschylus there are no blind alleys.'[80] In this section I argue that Aeschylus' narrative also invites us to either challenge our expectations and entertain the provisional possibility that another path, other than the anticipated one, might be followed, or, at least, he diverts our attention from what we have been waiting for and immerses us to a narrative of secrecy, ambivalence, and awaiting.

6.4.1. Suspense through withholding information

In this section, I demonstrate how suspense is generated through *withholding* information, while in the cases of foreknowledge (6.3.1) and exposition (6.3.3) I presented suspense through information which *is communicated*. I discuss the Watchman's opening speech (1–39), the Chorus' insistence on withholding (99–103, 456–60, 975–1000, 1030–33), and Clytemnestra's murder plans from the *Agamemnon*, and Orestes' plan to kill Clytemnestra from the *Libation Bearers*. I do not offer any examples from the *Eumenides*, as I argue that in that play suspense through narrative misdirection is provoked by delayed action (6.4.3).[81]

Although the prologue can generally work as a point of departure for building anticipation about how the story will develop all the way through to its conclusion, the prologues in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* rather constitute fields for experimentation on diverse ways of how to set the narrative in motion and to create suspense. Goward compares Aeschylus' technique in prologues with Euripides' expository technique: 'Aeschylus' narrative strategy works in exactly the opposite way and he deliberately does neither of these things: his purpose

[78] Morrison (1992) 4 and n. 7.

[79] On misdirection in Euripides, see Dunn (2007) 90–99; Ohlander (1989); Arnott (1973).

[80] Dunn (2007) 91.

[81] In the *Eumenides*, suspense is also provoked through narrative progression and more specifically by action, as it has been discussed in section under 6.3.2.

thereby is to create suspense.'[82] For the *Agamemnon*, she also notes that the information is 'notoriously deceitful, defective and ambiguous',[83] and 'all the characters are reluctant to give a full account of what they know'.[84] The general sense of the Watchman's speech is that it withholds more information than it gives. The prologue of the *Agamemnon* (1–39) could have been the only prologue of the *Oresteia* which includes key information for the whole tetralogy. However, even the little information the Watchman presents raises a number of questions. On the one hand, the announcement of the beacon light signifies the Greek victory in Troy and creates anticipation for Agamemnon's homecoming and the restoration of political stability in Argos. On the other hand, the secrecy of the whole scene and the allusions to Clytemnestra come to question those expectations. Even his eagerness to welcome Agamemnon, whom he greatly respects by contrast to Clytemnestra (34–5), is overshadowed of the final lines. This suppression of information reaches its peak in the last four lines of the prologue (36–9):

> The rest, I keep silent: a | great ox is treading on my tongue—but the house itself, if it | got a voice, would speak very plainly; I talk willingly to those | who know, and for those who do not know, I choose to forget.

The quote above, with a metaphor (36–7) and a conditional of the 'future less vivid' (37), illustrates the character's insistence on reticence. This attitude draws the readers' and the spectators' attention to his words and maximise their suspense, regardless of any familiarity with the myth. This is also brought up by the Watchman himself who divides his listeners into two types, 'those who know' (μαθοῦσιν, 39) and 'those who do not know' (οὐ μαθοῦσι, 39). Whether these words are understood as an allusion to the mythological tradition and the background of the story, and, more specifically, to the adultery of Clytemnestra and her relationship with Aegisthus, or as vague reference to an ongoing, yet unknown, precarious situation of the house, their cryptic meaning complicate any expectations, while also creating great anticipation for Clytemnestra's appearance in line 258.

[82] Goward (2005) 47.

[83] Goward (1999) 55. This comment refers to the *Libation Bearers* as well, while I argue that this second play includes this effect in a less obvious way.

[84] Goward (2005) 50.

The next example refers to Clytemnestra's concealment of her plans later in the play. From her first appearance on stage in line 258 to her departure in line 1068, her speeches are dominated by obscurity. Although this can be explained on the grounds of dramatic economy by the fact that the other on-stage characters must stay in the dark, it also creates a significant dramatic effect. For instance, her prayer to Zeus following Agamemnon's entrance in the palace (973–74) manages to heighten suspense due to its obscurity:

> Zeus, Zeus master-fulfiller, give my prayers fulfilment! And | may you indeed
> take care of whatever you mean to fulfil!

Clytemnestra's prayer to Zeus the Fulfiller refers to a future to which she is looking forward, but which is as yet undisclosed. Although there are other examples that could be discussed in this context, Clytemnestra's language is even more interesting for the ways it generates suspense through irony, a topic to be explored in 6.4.2.

The Chorus' persistent withholding information about the present and the future of Agamemnon's household causes mystery and secrecy which also contribute to the generation of suspense. With a range from subtle early statements in the play (99–103, 456–60) to emphatic remarks (975–1000, 1030–33), the members of the Chorus repeat their inability to express their ongoing thoughts and emotions.[85] They speak about their 'concern' (τῆσδε μερίμνης, 99), 'grim thoughts' (κακόφρων, 100), 'insatiable anxiety' (φροντίδ' ἄπληστον, 101) and 'pain devouring the spirit' (θυμοβόρον φρενὶ λύπην, 103). Although they provide details on the nature of their feelings regarding the future, they keep the reasons behind these emotions concealed. Later on, they mention their 'anxiety' which 'waits | to hear of things veiled over by night' provoked by citizens' 'talking', without, however, clarifying what is the content of those talks (459–60). After witnessing Clytemnestra's prayer to Zeus where she asks for fulfilment, they burst into a song of fear for the future but without, again, revealing the reasons (975–1000). They are dominated by 'terror' (δεῖμα, 976) because they *expect* something bad to happen (995–1000):

[85] Goward (2005) 50–51, 59.

> My innermost senses in truth are not idle; | with my mind correct | in judgement, my heart whirls round | at the fulfilment to come. | I pray that my expectations | turn out false and do not come to be fulfilled.

Finally, they explicitly state that they know what *may* happen, but they again withhold that information from us. At the end of their song, they emphasise that they would speak if the circumstances were different: 'my heart would have anticipated | my tongue here in pouring this out' (1030–33). This is reminiscent to what the Watchman had confessed in the prologue. The more the Chorus' emphasis on the need for silence, the more the readers' and the spectators' curiosity for what remains unsaid. In the *Agamemnon*, the Watchman, Clytemnestra, and, above all, the Chorus repeatedly urge the ones engaging with the narrative to *forget* what they know about the story and invite them to focus on what follows, which may be different.[86]

In the *Libation Bearers*, while Orestes fully exposes his twofold plan for the murder of Aegisthus (554–84),[87] there is no exposition at all of the plan for the murder of Clytemnestra. This absence frustrates our expectations created in the first half of the play. In the first half of the play, Orestes, Electra, and the Chorus have communicated with certainty that the event of the matricide *will* take place. However, Orestes, after declaring 'It's simply said' (554), restricts himself to explaining the plan of Aegisthus' murder, and we never learn how he plans to kill Clytemnestra. The references to her in these lines are hidden behind three verbal forms in the plural: κτείναντες (556), ληφθῶσι (557), θανόντες (558).[88] The lack of details for a crime such as a matricide intensifies our suspense, as we are left in the dark as to what will eventually happen.

It is plausible to assume that withholding information was central to how suspense was generated in *Proteus*. Because of its fragmentary condition, one needs to turn again to its presumably closest predecessor. In the *Odyssey*, Proteus is the sea-god figure who holds large amounts of information about the past, present, and future. In Book 4 (390ff.), Menelaus

[86] Goward (2005) 51, where she points out 'boldness of this strategy'.

[87] See section under 6.3.3 'Suspense through the exposition of future planning' above.

[88] Garvie (1976) 78 and n. 45. He also attempts to give the reasons behind this concealment, while I am interested in the effect this provokes.

narrates how Eidothea advised him how to take advantage of the wide range of Proteus' power of knowledge as well as what it takes to get access to this knowledge: 'If you can somehow lie in wait and catch him, **he will explain how you can get back home** (νόστον, 390), plotting your path where fish leap through the waters.'[89] There is no reason to deny such a power to Proteus in the satyr drama, where he may have been the one who manipulates either the release or the withholding of valuable information. Although in the *Odyssey* he is not presented with the gift of prophesying, the future is considered similarly accessible to him as is the present and the past: all three are temporal spheres to be explained. In this context, Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* constitutes a useful parallel. By contrast to Proteus, Cassandra is presented with the ability of prophesying which, however, is not received as a gift. The certainty of knowing the forthcoming events does not leave her unaffected, while the kind of secure knowledge that Proteus can provide guarantees Menelaus' safe homecoming after the shipwreck. By contrast to the *Agamemnon*, where, as I argued in Chapter 4,[90] we witness the transition from catastrophe to certainty, in *Proteus* catastrophe is realised as a lived reality that must be left behind. And this is exactly the type of intervention that Proteus' knowledge of the future makes possible.

It is conceivable that Proteus' withholding of information about the future is dramatised in two stages. First, in the scenes preceding Proteus' capture by Menelaus and his transformation, the spectators must have experienced suspense in the context of Menelaus' anguished attempts to find, capture, and extract valuable information from Proteus. The sea-god knows more than any human, which increases Menelaus' desperation to access that knowledge. In a second stage, in the scenes following Proteus' capture, suspense may have been experienced by the audience on the grounds that what Proteus presumably offers to Menelaus is only a brief and cryptic glimpse of what the future will bring. This is precisely the type of unconventional foretelling that Menelaus extracts from Proteus in the *Odyssey*: although Menelaus' nostos will be realised, the specific path to be taken and the post-nostos situation remain unknown. Similarly incomplete accounts of the future one can find elsewhere in the *Odyssey* with regard to Odysseus' nostos, which is repeatedly prophesied in the course of the plot but does not signify the end of his troubles.

[89] Wilson (2018).

[90] In section under 4.5 '*Proteus* between *present future* and *future present*'.

As seen in the examples above, withholding information regarding the future of the plot is experienced by the spectators and the readers as creating obscurity and keeps them in suspense, due to uncertainty and lack of direction. The Watchman clearly expresses his decision not to disclose any information about the future, whereas Clytemnestra (in the *Agamemnon*) and Orestes (in the *Libation Bearers*) also deprive readers and spectators of the opportunity to prepare themselves fully for what is to follow.

6.4.2. Suspense through irony

The concept of irony has been present in literary and rhetorical criticism since antiquity,[91] but it has also attracted a lot of attention recently.[92] Although it has been explored within classical scholarship in relation to several authors and texts, Aeschylus has received less attention than Sophocles and Euripides.[93] An extensive exploration of the concept of irony, its diverse definitions and types lies outside of the scope of this section. In essence, its different definitions as a figure of speech demonstrate as key element of irony the fact that it 'asks to be understood in a sense other than that of the actual words'.[94] Here I will focus only on how irony contributes to the generation of suspense through its potential to mislead its addressees, a largely under-explored topic which aligns irony with the purposes of this chapter. Suspense is created by cognitive discrepancies which the readers and spectators are invited to observe and resolve. For my purposes, two distinctive, unanimously acknowledged, categories of irony are important: 'dramatic irony' and 'verbal irony'.[95] While dramatic irony, which is traditionally associated with Greek tragedy, is created by 'the discrepancy between the

[91] On Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and irony, see Colebrook (2004) 1–2, Barbe (1995) 62–64. On irony in Greek tragedy, see Rutherford (2012); Markantonatos (2009); Rosenmeyer (1982).

[92] See for instance, Garmendia (2018) with a focus on verbal irony; Colebrook (2004) on a detailed analysis of literary irony and its complexities from antiquity to post-modernity. For further bibliography, see Garmendia (2018) 16.

[93] See for instance, Rutherford's claim (2012, 329–30) that tragic irony 'is more fully exploited and in subtler and more sophisticated ways in the latter part of the century' (additionally 335, 350 and 356). Along similar lines, see Rosenmeyer (1982) 324.

[94] In Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (6.2.16): 'quae diversum ei quod dicit intellectum petit'. See also 9.2.44, 401. For other definitions of irony: Garmendia (2018) 1–9; Colebrook (2004) 13–15; Rutherford (2012) 323 n. 1.

[95] For the distinction between dramatic irony and irony, see Pfister (1988) 55–56. For other types of irony see Colebrook (2004).

ignorance of the fictional protagonists and the awareness of the audience',[96] verbal irony is created by 'the notion of a meaning or intent beyond what we manifestly say or intend',[97] which points to a different kind of discrepancy between the ignorance of the audience and readers and the awareness of the narrative itself. Both dramatic irony and verbal irony operate across the divide between narrative and its recipients in ways that co-exist and interfere with each other.

In the examples that follow, I demonstrate how the diverse employments of irony maximise suspense for what is to come, through the disparities they manifest. I focus on Clytemnestra's speeches before and during her encounter with Agamemnon (587–614; 931–43, 958–74), on Agamemnon's entrance speech (810–54), and on the Cassandra scene in the *Agamemnon* (1033–350); on the scene leading to the recognition scene between Orestes and Electra and the scene itself (82–234) and the first encounter between Orestes and Clytemnestra in the *Libation Bearers* (653–718); finally, I look at lines 938–48, 958–67, 978–87 in the *Eumenides*, where the Furies promise an eternally utopian future for the Athenians.

Although in the case of *Agamemnon* information from within the plot is mostly withheld (6.4.1), irony is, nevertheless, related to types of prior knowledge, whether outside or inside the narrative. For instance, in the case of Clytemnestra's encounter with Agamemnon, both verbal irony and dramatic irony are at play, leading to tension and growing anticipation for Agamemnon's death. Before their first and only encounter, one can observe in lines 587–98, 599–601, and 607–9 three examples of verbal irony. In the first, Clytemnestra expresses her joy for the Greek victory in Troy to the members of the Chorus ('I cried out my joy', 587). In the second, she speaks about how she will welcome Agamemnon ('I shall learn the whole story from my lord himself; and I must | hasten to give my revered husband the best of welcomes now | he has come back', 599–601). In the third, she refers to herself as a faithful woman ('As to his wife, I wish he may find her | when he comes just as faithful in his home as the one he left | behind', 607–9). All those examples have a different meaning for the internal and external receivers of her speech. While both groups have to accept Agamemnon's return as the cause of her happiness, only the readers and the spectators

[96] Pfister (1988) 43, also cited by Fuchs (2000, 42 and n. 34). Garmendia (2018, 16) notes that dramatic irony is out of the scope of her study.

[97] Colebrook (2004) 15.

who have followed closely the plot will understand that the real source of her joy is that her plan has just started to look more imminent. The inability of the Chorus to recognise Clytemnestra's *verbal irony* is the source of *dramatic irony* for the readers and spectators. Suspense is created by the interplay of verbal and dramatic irony. As soon as we overcome the discrepancy, and we engage with the irony, we realise Clytemnestra's determination to commit the murder. Suspense, however, is also heightened by the anticipation of whether the Chorus will be eventually able to see the irony behind Clytemnestra's speech. What we have here, therefore, goes beyond Pfister's claim that the dramatic irony is only about 'the discrepancy between the figure's intended meaning and the actual interpretation of it by the audience'.[98]

The next example comes from Agamemnon's entrance speech where the dramatic irony lies in the fact that, similarly to the Chorus in the previous example, Agamemnon knows less than we do (810–54). Agamemnon outlines the details of his re-establishment as the king of Argos through future forms: βουλευσόμεσθα ('we must take counsel', 846), πειρασόμεσθα ('we shall try to avert', 850), and δεξιώσομαι ('I shall enter', 852), framed with the future formations εὖ μενεῖ ('may remain', 847) and ἐμπέδως μένοι ('remain steadfast', 854). Agamemnon's explicit presentation of his future plans manifests vividly the discrepancy between the future which Agamemnon imagines for himself and the future which we know that Clytemnestra plans for Agamemnon. Suspense is generated by the questions of *when* and *under what circumstances* Agamemnon will come to terms with the future that Clytemnestra has in store for him.

In her encounter with Agamemnon, Clytemnestra's speech (855–913) also contains several examples of the interplay between verbal and dramatic irony that contributes to the generation of suspense. In lines 855–56 and 895–902, we witness the verbal irony of her declaration of affection and admiration for Agamemnon:

> Men of the city, senior Argives here present, I | shall have no qualms in telling
> you how I love my husband.

[98] Pfister (1988) 57.

> Now I have endured all this, with a heart free from grief I | would call this man his palace's watchdog, a ship's forestay | keeping it safe, a pillar to a lofty roof sure on its footings, an | only-begotten son to his father, and land appearing to sailors | against their hopes, daylight most beautiful to the eyes after | storm, a stream welling for a thirsty traveller; it is sweet to escape from all stress.

At this point, we also witness the inability of both Agamemnon and the Chorus to engage with the real meaning of her words. In line 911, Clytemnestra encourages Agamemnon to step on to the fine fabrics guiding him into the palace: 'so that Justice may lead him into a home unexpected' (911). The verbal and dramatic irony of this scene is escalated by the double meaning of the word 'justice'. The use of 'justice' by Clytemnestra represents two contradictory meanings related to Agamemnon's return: justice can refer to Agamemnon's rightful victory against the Trojans but also to her own rightful revenge for Iphigenia's death.[99] Suspense is provoked by the dramatic and verbal irony as a result of the cognitive discrepancies between us and the internal addresses of Clytemnestra's speech.

Another example of cognitive discrepancies between external and internal receivers of a speech can be found in 'the Cassandra scene' (1035–330). Those cognitive discrepancies are created by the Chorus' inability, and perhaps unwillingness, to receive Cassandra's prophecies as anything but unintelligible and unpersuasive: 'I do not know of these divinations' (1105–6); 'I do not yet understand; I am at a loss from riddles made in black prophecies' (1112–13). Even when the prophecy communicates a clear and direct message ('I say that you will look upon the death of Agamemnon', 1246), the elderly men resist to engage with her words: 'Which man is to bring this evil thing about?' (1251).[100] As we watch or read this scene, we experience suspense not only by engaging with Cassandra's prophecies (6.3.1), but also by anticipating the Chorus' reaction. It is precisely this failed attempt to engage the internal audience which generates suspense as a result of maximum dramatic irony.

Moving on to the *Libation Bearers*, dramatic irony comes across as important from the moment when Electra and the Chorus appear on stage (22). We already *know* that this man is

[99] See also 1412–25 where Clytemnestra invokes Justice.

[100] For similar statements by the Chorus in this scene, see lines 1072-73, 1076-77, 1080-81, 1085–86, 1140–45.

Orestes, as he has introduced himself in the prologue (4–5) and has also recognised Electra from afar (16–17). The physical presence of Orestes and Pylades, who have concealed themselves near Agamemnon's tomb, contradicts the following lines, creating great irony and raising questions about how the scene will develop:

> CHORUS: Remember Orestes, even if he's abroad. 115
>
> ELECTRA: Orestes is in exile from his property. 136
>
> CHORUS: What you say makes me no less ready with my tears | if he is never to set foot in this land. 181–82

The more the lines contradict reality, the more the irony is increased. The already increased anticipation for the meeting of the siblings escalates from the moment of Electra's discovery of the lock of hair (168) and the footprints (205–6) at Agamemnon's tomb, which we *know* belong to Orestes, and the eventual disclosure of Orestes. In their stichomythia (211–25), different levels of knowledge involving Electra, Orestes, and us clash. Electra refers to Orestes as if he is still away (216, 218), while she thinks that the man in front of her, who *is* Orestes, is a stranger (220–21, 224). Lines 215–23 also demonstrate the cognitive gap between the two characters, with our knowledge being aligned with Orestes'. Although this type of suspense through irony does not carry the associations with fear that we have seen in the *Agamemnon*, here suspense is provoked by the anticipation of Electra's transition from ignorance to recognition, a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the matricide.

The next example is one of the most powerful scenes in terms of generation of suspense, as it features the first encounter between Orestes and Clytemnestra (668–718).[101] Its dramatic irony originates in the disparities between Clytemnestra's ignorance and what we know together with Orestes. Clytemnestra's ignorance becomes obvious by her use of the word '[s]trangers' (ξένοι, 668), while we know that she addresses her own son. Orestes' reference to himself as 'stranger' (674) and the false report of his own death (674–90)

[101] On their second encounter (885–930), see section under 6.4.3. 'Suspense through action delayed' below.

disorientate Clytemnestra even more. Our suspense is also intensified by Orestes' use of verbal irony in lines 704–6, where a double meaning is given to the words 'matter' (πρᾶγμα) and 'friends' (φίλοις):

> I thought it would be near impiety in me however not | to bring such a matter to a head for friends when I had agreed | to, and now that I have been welcomed as their guest.

While the word 'matter' is understood by Clytemnestra as the delivery of the news for Orestes' death, it is interpreted by us as Orestes' act of revenge. Although Clytemnestra understands 'friends' as a reference to Strophius to whom, according to the false report, Orestes had promised to deliver the message (the 'matter'), we interpret it as a reference to Electra and Agamemnon by whom his act of revenge is motivated. Clytemnestra's reply (707–8) can also be understood in two ways without her intending so: 'Be sure, you will not receive less than you | deserve, nor would you be less of a friend in the house' (707–8). While she refers to the kind of hospitality the two strangers deserve, we can also connect this phrase to Orestes' act of revenge. Those examples demonstrate how we are kept in suspense, awaiting to see the unfolding of Orestes' plan, while also expecting Clytemnestra to recognise Orestes.

In the *Eumenides*, the type of irony that is employed and addressed to the audience in lines 938–48, 958–67, and 978–87 goes beyond what we have seen so far.[102] The difference lies in the fact that the prior knowledge required for irony to work does not originate either from our engagement with the plot or from our familiarity with the myth. Rather, it emerges from real life experience. Following Athena's request (903– 15), the Furies as the new Awesome Goddesses will be acting as regulators of human affairs (930–31). In this context, they promise goods to the Athenian community which we as future beholders know that cannot be promised (938–48, 958–67, 978–87). For example, the fertility of the crops and livestock (938–48), the cessation of misfortunes such as wars which cause premature deaths (958–67), and Athens' immunity from civil strife (978–87) are bound to have a tint of irony for any spectator or reader, let alone when they are promised to last for eternity (975, 977). This type of irony

[102] Rutherford (2012, 325 n. 7) argues that irony is absent from this play.

generates suspense which is associated not with the uncertainty of what is coming next *within the plot* (as is the case with the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*) but with a sense of uncertainty regarding matters that go *beyond the plot* (as discussed in Chapter 3 above). In the *Eumenides*, verbal irony coincides with dramatic irony, as the Awesome Goddesses' confident assertion that they know about the future of the Athenian citizens more than the Athenian citizens themselves do can be proved unfounded.

6.4.3. Suspense through action delayed

In this final section of suspense through narrative misdirection, I look at how delay, 'a prolongation of expected narrative duration',[103] contributes to the generation of suspense. The interrelation between delay and suspense and its significance in Aeschylus have been touched on, but not elaborated, by Goward: delay is 'another temporal *dolos* highly typical of Aeschylus and productive of suspense'.[104] Although Dunn also acknowledges that delays in Greek tragedy more generally are employed to 'impede progress toward a known goal and thus help to generate suspense and interest in the reader', he limits the employment of delays in Aeschylus to the imbalance between human and divine power.[105] In what follows, I take a close look at six examples: from the *Agamemnon*, I discuss the omen in parodos (40–257), the Cassandra's scene (1035–330), and the Chorus's reaction to Agamemnon's death cries (1346–71); from the *Libation Bearers*, I examine Orestes' and Clytemnestra's second encounter (885–930); from the *Eumenides*, I look at Pythia's speech (34–63) and the Furies' choral song before the beginning of the trial (490–565).

The omen regarding Iphigenia's sacrifice (104–259), situated within the Chorus' entrance song of the *Agamemnon* (40–257), induces suspense by contributing to the manipulation of time. As I discussed in section under 5.3.1 'Omens, prophecies, dreams', although the omen serves as part of an exposition of past events (Iphigenia's sacrifice and the sack of Troy), it also foreshadows a catastrophe in the future. What I add in this section is that the omen is also employed to generate anticipation through narrative delay. The narrative of

[103] See Goward (1999) 62–64, 75.

[104] Goward (1999) 60, 62.

[105] Dunn (2007) 96–97 (quote from 96).

the omen and its interpretation extend over 150 lines, which creates ambiguity and foreboding, raising questions about what *exactly* it means (Baroni's *suspense par anticipation*) and about *how* and *when* the foreshadowed events will materialise (Baroni's *suspense moyen*).[106] One who *knows* that Agamemnon's murder is the event foreshadowed experiences suspense about the specific circumstances this will take place (*how* and *when*). One who does not know experiences suspense about *what kind* of catastrophe is expected in the near future.

The 'Cassandra scene' (1035–330) also contributes to provoking intense suspense by delaying action and deferring Agamemnon's murder for 300 lines. Parallel to the generation of suspense through foreknowledge (6.3.1) and through irony (6.4.2), as previously discussed, this scene induces suspense by causing temporal extension.[107] This manipulation of time is directed by the elements of achrony, repetition, and lack of sequentiality.[108] While the anticipation for Agamemnon's murder grows, Cassandra's time travels immerse readers and viewers by drawing their attention to her experience of *future present* (0). She repetitively exclaims the future events she prophecies, in different modes, without order. During those lines, we are invited again and again to engage with her narrative, while the inability of the Chorus to act in a similar way, delays even more the completion of the scene. Although a pause in action can typically lead to a decline in the readers' or the audience's attention, in the case of the 'Cassandra scene' it concentrates their focus on the action to follow more effectively.

Following the materialisation of Agamemnon's murder, the anticipation of its consequences is not only kept alive but further reignited by a thirty-line delay caused by the Chorus' reaction (as discussed in 5.4.1 above and 7.4.2 below). After the stretching of time in the 'Cassandra scene', another, this time shorter, extension is employed when the Chorus is divided into individual voices in response to the crisis (1348–71).[109] Although each member explicitly suggests a plan for action, they completely refrain from action, or as Taplin observes, 'the words are an alternative to action'.[110] While each suggestion gives us the time to realise

[106] See Grethlein (2017, 101) regarding the omen in Apollodorus' *Ethiopica*.

[107] Goward (1999) 75.

[108] Goward (2005) 53.

[109] Taplin (1977) 323–24.

[110] Taplin (1977) 324.

what has just happened, it also adds more suspense due to the Chorus' delay. When they finally agree on a plan, the opportunity for action has already been missed. However, another round of suspense has been introduced for anyone who follows the plot closely.

Moving on to the *Libation Bearers*, the second encounter between Clytemnestra and Orestes (892–930) maximises suspense not only by delaying the materialisation of the matricide, but also by cultivating, even temporarily, the possibility of its cancellation. Orestes' immediate address to Clytemnestra ('It's you I'm seeking!', 892) is not followed by him leading her inside the palace. Instead of moving closer to the matricide, more delay is experienced, which allows for Clytemnestra's powerful manifestation of motherhood (896–98) and Orestes' hesitation to go ahead with killing his mother (899). According to Goward, 'the question creates an extraordinary moment of suspense'.[111] Apart from the striking character of those events which will be discussed under 'Surprise' in the next chapter, we can observe again here a manipulation of time through the prolonging of anticipation for a pivotal event. Orestes' next attempt to kill his mother is found in lines 904–5: 'Follow me! Right by this man's | side is where I wish your slaughter.' But this is again deferred for more than twenty lines, during which Orestes engages with Clytemnestra in another intense exchange (908–930), which keeps him away from his target and us in anticipation.

My first example of suspense through delay in the *Eumenides* refers to the delayed on-stage appearance of the Furies (in line 140),[112] the anticipation of which is increased by Pythia's speech in the second half of the prologue (34–63).[113] Although this anticipation has started to build up through references to the Furies in the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers*,[114] it escalates even earlier in this play. The employment of such a technique as early as the prologue was already noticed for the *Eumenides* in antiquity, with the ancient scholiast arguing that Aeschylus postpones the climax by employing the idea of *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία). According to *oikonomia*, the poet orders the events in a way that the readers and spectators

[111] Goward (1999) 67.

[112] I follow Taplin (1977, 369–74) who argues that the Furies do not appear before 140, rather than before 64.

[113] For the first half of Pythia's prologue (1–33) and the hiatus before line 34, see Chapter 7 below (section 7.3.1).

[114] See for example, *Agamemnon* 1186–93; *Libation Bearers* 1048–50.

will be looking forward to their climactic unfolding. The delayed representation of Orestes' pursuit by the Furies is 'kept in store' (ταμιευόμενος) as the scholion suggests.[115]

Along similar lines, Taplin argues that 'the longer the revelation is held back, the more the suspense of waiting...'.[116] Although Pythia exclaims that what she saw is '[t]errifying to describe', she does offer a description in the type of an *ekphrasis* (45–58).[117] However, Pythia's attempt to define the spectacle inside Apollo's temple takes longer than expected and is not at all straightforward: '—no, I do not mean women, but Gorgons; but on the | other hand I can't compare them to Gorgon-figures' (48–49). She, then, recalls a painting with depictions similar but not identical to those in the temple: 'I did see those in a painting once before, carrying off Phineus' banquet; | these however have no wings to be seen' (50–51). In lines 52–56, Pythia, finally, focuses on the Furies' appearance, followed by further comments which cause even more delay (57–63). The delay of the Furies' appearance does not end with the end of the prologue. Rather, their anticipation will be prolonged further: in line 64 we are transferred inside the temple where Orestes as a suppliant is advised by Apollo (64–93); their departure will then be followed by the appearance of Clytemnestra's ghost (94–116).

The second example from the *Eumenides* which increases suspense through delay is found in the choral song of lines 490–565. It is positioned just after Athena's announcement of the new legal system with which Orestes will be tried (470–89). This makes the anticipation of the trial which will follow even greater (566–710). In this choral song, the Furies offer a full account of the horrific consequences in case of Orestes' acquittal. For seventy-five lines, they describe the moral and social chaos awaiting humankind, where all sorts of afflictions will dominate: 'catastrophe' (490–91), 'suffering', 496–7), 'rancour' (501), 'death' (502), 'torment' (506), 'disaster' (509), 'total destruction' (552). The Furies' simple answer to how order can be safeguarded and how people can be forced to obey laws and respect justice is 'terror' (516) and 'fear' (517, 519, 522). The repetitive character and the powerful tone of their song distract the spectators and the readers from the trial, while also creating suspense for what will happen

[115] Scholion on Aeschylus' *Eumenides* 1: Smith (1976, 42, 16–18): οἰκονομικῶς οὐκ ἐν ἀρχῇ διώκεται Ὀρέστης, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ δράματος κατατάττει, ταμιευόμενος τὰ ἀκμαιότατα ἐν μέσῳ. See Meijering (1987) 144, 198.

[116] Taplin (1977) 371. Taplin concludes his sentence by '…and the greater the impact when it is finally made', a matter to be discussed in Chapter 7 below.

[117] On this scene as an *ekphrasis*, see also Nooter (2017) 252, citing Frontisi-Ducroux (2006) 50. On *ekphrasis* and narrative delay, see Kania (2016).

should Orestes become acquitted. Even if one knows the outcome of the trial in favour of Orestes, this song thematises what the Furies state in line 544: 'an end (τέλος) is appointed and waits (μένει)'. The emphasis lies on the verb μένει which highlights the prolongation of the anticipation, while τέλος points to the catastrophe as the fulfilment of this anticipation (as discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4).

If we accept that Proteus' transformations constitute a central part of *Proteus*' plot, assuming it follows the *Odyssey*, it is very likely that those transformations must have kept its audience in suspense. Proteus, represented as a god in Aeschylus (unlike, say, Euripides), may well have demonstrated his capability of causing delay by changing forms.[118] This may have taken place either off-stage, so we learn about it through a messenger speech, or on-stage. Both possibilities might have dealt with Proteus' several and consecutive transformations, leading to narrative delay. This delay defers Menelaus' discovery of the truth about his future, keeping the audience entertained and, at the same time, in suspense. This aspect of Proteus' transformation will have also caused surprise, as will discussed in the next chapter (7.4.1).

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that suspense in the *Oresteia* needs to be understood as a multifaceted concept and not as a concept with a single and absolute meaning. For this reason, I have argued that the process of familiarisation with suspense calls for a careful study of its narrative instigators, manifestations, and levels of experience.

Instead of an abstract, speculative, and conventional, almost formulaic, use of the term 'suspense' often found in the bibliography, my analysis has offered a specific, justified, inclusive, and workable model for the discourse of suspense. Suspense is an attribute of both narrative progression (6.3) and narrative misdirection (6.4), narrative movements through which readers and spectators build their expectations for the future of the plot unfolding. In the case of narrative progression, suspense is generated through foreknowledge (6.3.1), through action (6.3.2) and through the characters' exposition of future plans (6.3.3). In the case of narrative misdirection, suspense is developed through withholding information (6.4.1),

[118] Marshall (2015) 87.

through irony (6.4.2) and through delayed action (6.4.3), techniques through which our expectations are frustrated.

More specifically, in the *Agamemnon* the distribution of information that prepares for Agamemnon's death is mostly deceptive, while the action is largely delayed and undermines a clear sense of direction. In the *Libation Bearers*, there is an overall balance between progression and misdirection. While in the first half of the play suspense is increased because of the certainty that the matricide will happen, in the second half the readers and spectators witness the plot moving fast towards the major event of the matricide, with powerful touches of misdirection. In the *Eumenides*, the distribution of information takes place alongside the unfolding of events, with misdirection being employed as the play moves away from and beyond the event of Orestes' acquittal. Finally, the satyr drama *Proteus* is also likely to have provoked suspense, not least, in relation to how Menelaus seeks to find his way back to Greece, against the challenges he experiences in the unknown land of Egypt.

In the following chapter, I will show how those same aspects of the future become a foundation of surprise as well.

7

Surprise

7.1. Introduction

The concept of surprise, similarly to the concept of suspense (Chapter 6), lies within the scope of the effects created by anticipation and manipulation of readerly and spectatorial expectations for the future. However, unlike suspense, the power of surprise needs to be found not in *creating* anticipation and *rising* expectations but in *interrupting* anticipation and demonstrating the *unexpectedness* of the future. While suspense rises climactically and depends on distribution of information, surprise takes place when climax has been reached and knowledge has been attained.[1] Although Aeschylus is very well known, almost notorious, since antiquity for eliciting *ekplexis* (see 7.2), this is only one aspect of how Aeschylus employs the concept of surprise in his plays. In this chapter, I will first present an overview of the concept of *surprise* and its reception by critics, from antiquity to the twenty-first century. Then, following the logic of the previous chapter, I will look at how surprise in the *Oresteia* is achieved through narrative progression (7.3) and narrative misdirection (7.4). In this chapter, I argue that surprise in the *Oresteia* needs to be understood as equally important as, but also distinct from, suspense, as both a dramatic technique and an effect, which invites the readers and spectators to experience and, thus, to come to terms with aspects of the future such as its unexpectedness and its abruptness.

[1] Goward (1999) 58.

7.2. Theoretical prelude

When it comes to the discussion of reading and spectating effects, it is customary in modern scholarship, first, to discuss surprise together with suspense, and, second, to prioritise suspense over surprise (both in word order and in semantics).[2] In my approach, I argue that both are intimately related to responses to the uncertainty of the future and reflect the reader's or viewer's immersion into the narrative. Their difference lies in the fact that, while suspense is experienced in the context of thinking about an *existing* future, or, as Mark Currie puts it, 'waiting for its arrival, and for the object of thinking to pass from virtuality into actuality', surprise is experienced *in the absence of future*.[3]

Although definitions and approaches of surprise come from several fields of study, with varying levels of interest and engagement, the modern concept of *surprise* remains largely under-theorised. From the area of psychology, Ortony and his co-authors relate surprise with *unexpectedness* and argue that both terms describe a cognitive state rather than an emotional one.[4] From the area of narratology, Seymour Chatman also highlights the cognitive quality of surprise which 'depends on our ignorance'.[5] By contrast, Gerald Prince describes surprise as 'the emotion of a reader, which is obtained when expectations about what is going to happen are violated by what in fact does happen'.[6] Elements of surprise mentioned in the definitions and ideas above point to possible directions such a discussion may take. Before we move on to more focused studies, it is useful to turn to the beginnings of the concept which has been around since antiquity.

The concept of surprise as the readers' and the spectators' cognitive and emotional engagement with the narrative appears in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*. More specifically, in the *Rhetoric* it signifies the effect related to fear and in the *Poetics* the aesthetic

[2] See, indicatively, Walton (1990) 259–71. Hitchcock, for instance, privileges the effect of suspense over surprise, as for him 'the audience always have to know'. See Truffaut & Hitchcock (1962), n. 9 in Chapter 6 above. On suspense and surprise as interrelated elements (including in Hitchock's filmmaking), see Lütticken (2006). Cf. Pyrhönen (2005, 578): 'Although the interplay of suspense and surprise traditionally constitutes a feature of good plotting, they are not necessarily linked to each other'.

[3] Currie (2013) 11.

[4] Ortony, Clore, & Collins (1988) 32–33.

[5] Chatman (1993) 21.

[6] Prince (2003) 96.

effect that a tragedy must achieve. This wide range of the meanings of surprise in Aristotle is reflected in the multiplicity of the occurring terms. The link between surprise and fear is demonstrated through the association between unexpectedness and the effect of fear on the part of the audience ('that at the hands of those from whom **they did not expect i**t, in such a manner and at times when **they did not think it likely**', 1383a).[7] The idea of surprise as an aesthetic quality of a tragedy is incorporated within the constituent elements of the plot, the 'reversals' and the 'recognitions', both of transitional and transformational character, with the phrase 'when events occur contrary to expectation yet still on account of one another' (παρὰ τὴν δόξαν δι᾽ ἄλληλα, 1452a4–7).[8] Reversals and recognitions are unexpected, thus, surprising events, and at the same time subject to the forces of 'probability' (τὸ εἰκὸς) and 'necessity' (τὸ ἀναγκαῖον), thus, within the range of the audience's expectations.[9] To emphasise the effect of the technique of recognition (*anagnorisis*), the critic uses the next relevant term: ἐκπληκτικόν 'thrilling', from ἔκπληξις (1454a4).[10] The cognates of *thauma* (θαῦμα) as 'awe', θαυμαστὸν 'awesome' (1452a3, 1456a20–21, 1460a11–18), θαυμασιώτατα (1452a5–6) refer to the intensity of surprise, not as experienced by the audience, but as employed in the plot as the wondrous.[11] Tragic plots pursue the element of the awesome, which again should incorporate the criterion of being *probable* (εἰκότα μᾶλλον), albeit *impossible* (ἀδύνατα), rather than being *improbable* (ἀπίθανα) and *possible* (δυνατὰ). Elsewhere, Aristotle returns to the issue of how the element of surprise is not spoilt by a high level of probability in the plot.[12] Thus, in Aristotle the concept of surprise is projected to both reception-oriented and plot-related issues, while it must always be under the control of

[7] See also Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*: 'Again, men are angry when the event is **contrary to their expectation** (παρὰ δόξαν), for the more unexpected a thing, the more it pains; just as they are overjoyed if, **contrary to expectation** (παρὰ δόξαν), what they desire comes to pass (1379a); 'he [the listener] has learned something when the conclusion turns out **contrary to his expectation** (παρὰ τὸ ἐναντίως ἔχειν) (1412a). On *para prosdokian* in Aristophanes, see Kanellakis (2020).

[8] Ferrari notes (1999, 190–91) that there is no adversative in the Greek text, thus, we should render as follows: 'against expectation because of one another'. For the effect of 'reversal' (περιπέτεια *peripeteia*, μεταβολή) see, for example: 1450a35, 1452a22, 1451a15. For the effect of recognition (ἀναγνώρισις), see, for example: 1450a35, 1452b9–13, 1455a15–21. See also Halliwell (1987) 117.

[9] 1451b12–13, 1451b38–39. Despite the difference between the translations (see previous note), both scholars that this unexpectedness is not in contrast with the causal relations of events but part of it. This is very much in line with Ricoeur's discordant concordance that I discuss below. See also Liveley (2019) 36.

[10] See also 1460b25: ἐκπληκτικώτερον 'more thrilling'. Just to mention that the term ἔκπληξις has survived in Modern Greek as έκπληξη to signify surprise mostly in positive terms.

[11] See also Nünlist (2009) 145 for a similar use of *thauma* in the ancient scholia.

[12] For more on this issue, see Wohl (2014) 147–48.

specific plot regulations. As Halliwell points out, '[e]ven at the crux of the complex plot, where the twist of events is most acute and unexpected, Ar. still insists…on the fundamental logic or coherence of the dramatic action'.[13]

The term ἔκπληξις for surprise as the audience's reaction to the unexpected is used by Longinus as well in his rhetorical treatise *On the Sublime*. The author categorises surprise as the type of *phantasia* 'visualisation' one finds in poetical form, which is also the object (τέλος) of it.[14]

Along the same lines, the ancient critics of dramatic poetry employ the idea of *surprise* with the terms ἔκπληξις and θαῦμα as the effect of the spectacular. The examples of criticism on Greek tragic plays I draw on come from Sophocles' *Ajax* and, most importantly for the purposes of this thesis, from Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.[15] The word ἔκπληξις appears twice in *Ajax* to describe 'the effect of a scenic presentation instead of a verbal report',[16] in two scenes of bloodshed, in the middle of the butchered animals and his suicide on stage.[17] A scholion in the prologue of the *Eumenides* mentions the word ἔκπληξις with regard to Pythia's reaction at the sight of the Furies and Orestes:

> All unawares she sees the Erinyes asleep in a circle around Orestes, and she informs the audience about it all. However, she does not simply relate what is happening offstage (for this is a novelty peculiar to Euripides), but **it is owing to her fright** (ὑπό δέ τῆς ἐκπλήξεως) that she talks of what has confused her: a clever trick of the poet (φιλοτέχνως).[18]

The scholiast's comment draws a comparison between Euripides and Aeschylus according to which Aeschylus' employment of Pythia's experience of surprise *within* the plot in the prologue is much more artistic than Euripides'. This comment demonstrates the ancient

[13] Halliwell (1987) 125. See also 117: 'Wonder elicited by a startling turn of events must, if conformity to the canon of probability or necessity is to be maintained, give way to a realisation of the underlying causation of events'.

[14] Longinus' *On the Sublime* 15.2–3. I cite Russell's translation (1964).

[15] For examples of ἔκπληξις from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see Nünlist (2009) 145.

[16] Nünlist (2009) 144–45.

[17] Schol. Sophocles' *Ajax* 346a & 815a.

[18] Meijering (1987) 195–96.

critics' awareness of how the dramatic representation of the effect of surprise in Aeschylus goes beyond the experience of surprise by the character, towards the experience of surprise by the audience as well: through her detailed narration Pythia re-experiences the horrifying spectacle from inside the temple alongside with the audience this time.

Another example of ancient criticism on Aeschylus' *Eumenides* with regard to the employment of surprise as ἔκπληξις comes from the *Life of Aeschylus*. There, Aeschylus is said to have used visual effects in his plays 'for the sake of portentous **shock** (πρὸς **ἔκπληξιν** τερατώδη) rather than for the sake of beguiling the audience',[19] a comment heavily indebted to Aristophanes' *Frogs*.[20] The *Life* also includes a special reference to the compelling visual impact of the original production of the *Eumenides*, according to which Aeschylus 'frightened (ἐκπλῆξαι) the people so much that some children lost consciousness and unborn babies were aborted.'[21] This expressive and vivid comment of Aeschylus' staging of the Furies, despite all the questions about its reliability, conveys something of the power of the play to 'strike' its audience.[22] A similarly questionable historically but, nevertheless, telling variant of the above is also provided by Pollux:

> Formerly, the tragic chorus had fifty members, until the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus. For when the audience was scared out of their wits by their multitude, a law reduced the number of chorus members.[23]

The ideas presented above are fused into the modern concept of surprise which has been further developed through detailed studies on surprise published in the twenty-first century. Those studies can be found in the area of scholarship which crosses the disciplinary boundaries of literary criticism, narrative, and philosophy of time, such as those by Christopher Miller, Vera Tobin, and Mark Currie.[24] Miller's study offers 'a literary and

[19] *Life* 7=*TrGF* 3, T 1.25s.

[20] Lefkowitz (2012²) 70. On the connection between *ekplexis* and powerful literature, see Segal (1962) 130–32.

[21] *Life* 9=*TrGF* 3, T 1.9.

[22] For instance, Taplin (1977) 39–40.

[23] Pollux's *Onomastikon* 4.110=*TrGF* 3, T 66.

[24] Miller (2015); Currie (2013); Tobin (2018).

intellectual history of an emotion', exploring a wide range of meanings of surprise,[25] with examples ranging from seventeenth to nineteenth-century English literature. While it puts forward a useful overview of the history of surprise as an aesthetic term, its focus is rather narrow for the purposes of my Chapter.

With a significant shift of focus, Tobin's study explores the type of the 'well-made surprise', its constituents and techniques, and our *cognitive* engagement and subsequent pleasure, when this type of surprise is revealed, recognised, understood, and acknowledged.[26] The author draws on various cognitive theories of memory, perception, and narrative linguistics, and presents as case studies well-known works of prose fiction and film.[27] This study provides us with a consistent systematised model which is put to test for explorations of surprise in novels and films. Additionally, the author's chosen approach to work on *elements* of surprise instead of the concept as an undivided entity liberates us from dealing with its rigidity and impasses. Such an approach lies in similar lines with how I organise and develop my chapter and the whole thesis as well. However, Tobin does not deal with the aspect of surprise as shock, which is manifested verbally, aurally, and visually, a regular phenomenon in Greek tragedy.[28] Also, not all types of surprise can fit within Tobin's model of well-made surprises and their pleasurable effect. Most significantly, the study demonstrates minimum engagement with the alliance between surprise and the future temporality, which is what lies at core of this chapter and my thesis as a whole: the argument that narrative surprise simulates real-life experiences of the always unknown future ahead, while it is simulated accordingly by them.

This idea, being at the core of Ricoeur's mimesis 3, is employed and further expanded by Mark Currie in his preoccupation with the philosophy of surprise. He emphasises the limited interest of the narratologists of the twentieth century in the concept of surprise and explains this as part of a more general tendency to hesitate to engage with the future.[29] Therefore, his study importantly puts forward future temporality and focuses on narrative

[25] Miller (2015) 1–6, quote from p. 2.

[26] Tobin (2018).

[27] Such as *Othello* by Shakespeare, *Emma* by Jane Austen, *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, *Villette* by Charlotte Brontë, *Atonement* by Ian McEwan.

[28] See section under 7.4.3 'Surprise through shock'.

[29] As discussed in the Introduction, section 1.1. See Currie (2013) 34–35.

surprise through the concepts of the unexpected and the (un)foreseeable. Those interests make Currie's study more intellectually relevant to my thesis than the ones mentioned above.

The central idea that runs throughout Currie's study is that the narrative fuses together two apparently incompatible ideas of the future – the future which is to come and the future which is already there.[30] The interaction between the foreseeable and the unforeseeable, which is outlined as the epitome of any narrative, does not occur between the past and the future, but between two types of future: the future as already happened and the unforeseeable future ahead. Thus, through the reading process, the future is not experienced as totally unforeseeable but as something which is re-visited, drawing on Ricoeur's model of mimesis. On those grounds, the narrative surprise, as Currie argues, 'becomes a question not of unforeseeable happenings, but of unforeseen disclosures.'[31] Narrative surprise is no longer generated by the advent of unexpected events but by a way of narrative misdirection created within the plot.[32] This new perspective that Currie suggests lies exclusively on the act of reading and revives the attention to the future temporality, which has been neglected in favour of explorations of the past.

Meir Sternberg and Paul Ricoeur are exceptions to this general tendency, as they both situate surprise at the centre of their narrative models.[33] Sternberg presents *surprise* as one of his master tropes which define narrative, together with *suspense* and *curiosity*,[34] arguing that surprise is related to the disclosure of cognitive gaps from the past which the readers *recognise* at a later point.[35] Precisely because of his focus on the past, rather than the future, Sternberg's theory is less important for my analysis below. Ricoeur, on the other hand, argues that surprise needs to be defined 'in terms of the relationship of expectation created by the internal course of the plot', and not in terms of external knowledge.[36] This view on surprise as

[30] Currie (2013) 13.

[31] Currie (2013) 44.

[32] Narrative misdirection is one of the main two types of narrative engagement which I employ in the structure and content of Chapters 6 and 7 (sections 6.4 and 7.4).

[33] See the relevant discussion in Currie (2013) 37–51, especially 37–39.

[34] Sternberg (2003a) & (2003b).

[35] On Sternberg's surprise, see (2003a) 327, (2003b) 517–18, (1992) 524.

[36] Ricoeur (1984, I) 240 and n. 26. He continues the passage as follows: 'Does the tragedy of Oedipus preserve its character of peripeteia for us who know the framework of the story and its outcome? Yes, …'.

'discordant concordance'[37] is central for my approach, as it explicitly and actively associates the spectating and the reading process with the coming of the future as a 'disconfirmation' which is what makes a story meaningful at the end.[38]

In modern classical scholarship, a similarly wide range of views has been put forward. Although Francis Dunn discusses to some extent the employment of surprise in all three tragedians,[39] he argues that, while in Euripides, and, to some extent, in Sophocles, surprise is a common feature, in Aeschylus there are no surprises. As he notes: 'There is nothing like this in the plays of Aeschylus, who uses shock and surprise sparingly, reserving them for descriptive purposes.'[40] Thomas Rosenmeyer associates surprise in Aeschylus, not with an outcome of the unexpectedness in the plot, but with a consequence of Aeschylus' handling of 'the rhetoric of the scenes',[41] arguing that this works reductively for the spectator's surprise, because the end is already in sight from the beginning.[42] However, other scholars such as A.F. Garvie, Oliver Taplin, and Keith Bednarowski do acknowledge surprise as an essential dramatic effect in Aeschylus' plays, albeit on different grounds. Although A.F. Garvie argues that the essential surprise is that of the characters and not of the audience, he explores how dramatic surprise is achieved through misleading the audience in Aeschylus' plays.[43] Taplin argues that striking elements are well-integrated in Aeschylus' plots,[44] while Bednarowski restricts his analysis of surprise in Aeschylus to issues related exclusively to prior knowledge of the original audience.[45]

Drawing on the theoretical background outlined in this section, I argue that surprise does not lie so much in complexities that rise from given tragic conventions and from any

[37] Ricoeur (1984, I) e.g., 38, 67.

[38] On surprise as disconfirmation, Kermode writes (1967, 18): 'Now peripeteia depends upon our confidence of the end; it is a disconfirmation followed by a consonance; the interest of having our expectations falsified is obviously related to our wish to reach the discovery or recognition by an unexpected and instructive route.'

[39] Dunn (2007) 88–95.

[40] Dunn (2007) 88.

[41] Rosenmeyer (1982) 328–29. The scholar also mentions (ibid. 328) the scene from the *Seven against Thebes*, where Eteocles' surprise and recognition that he will have to fight with his brother are so powerful, as if unexpected.

[42] Rosenmeyer (1982) 329: 'But, once again, we note that the development is not entirely unexpected, and that the surprise is to the character rather than to the spectator'.

[43] Garvie (1976).

[44] Taplin (1977) 39–42.

[45] Bednarowski (2015).

familiarity with well-known mythological cycles. Rather, it lies in narrativity, in juxtapositions between different stages *within* the plot, and its experience by readers and spectators as a manifestation of what Ricoeur calls 'discordant concordance',[46] the artful emplotment of eventfulness.

7.3. Surprise and narrative progression

I begin with passages where surprise is generated when an important piece of information for the future is revealed. As my focus is on surprise and narrative progression, I show how the surprising nature of such revelations contributes to our making sense of the plot and its development. What follows is structured around categories for three different techniques through which the readers and the spectators can be taken by surprise: at the beginning of the play, through off-stage action, and through the unexpected appearance of characters.

7.3.1. Surprise at the beginning

In this section, the effect of surprise is achieved through the occurrence of sudden events very early in the plot. In the previous chapter we saw that narrative in the prologue can provoke suspense through withholding information (5.4.1) and through action delayed (5.4.3). By contrast, in the examples that follow, we have the release of information in the shape of the emergence of events, whose unexpectedness lies in our ignorance of *when* they will happen. As Roberts notes, '[i]f audience knowledge precludes major surprises, it leaves room for both minor surprises and suspense (when and how will the expected ending come about?)'.[47] No matter whether major or minor surprises are at play, in all three tragic prologues the speaker becomes interrupted by an unexpected event around which the whole plot has been built. This as a result creates further uncertainty for the future.

[46] See for example, Ricoeur (1984, I) 43.

[47] Roberts (2005) 141.

In the *Agamemnon*, surprise is experienced simultaneously by the ones who read and watch the play and the Watchman who is struck by the news of the beacon light in the middle of his prologue speech (22–24):

> The beacon! Greetings to you! You show daylight in the night, | and mean the setting up of many dances in Argos to mark this | good fortune!

We have been informed for the significance of this beacon light in the very first lines where the character describes his watching duty: 'the year-long watch' (2); 'And now I am on watch for a beacon's sign, a gleam of fire | bringing word from Troy and report of its capture' (8–10). Although it becomes obvious that the beacon light is bound to appear soon (as it is a prerequisite for the unfolding plot), its emergence comes as a surprise due to our immersion in the Watchman's speech. First, his repeated references to his misery (1, 20) and his oblique insinuations for the current circumstances in Agamemnon's house (9–20) draw our attention to the main events of the plot to come. The effect of surprise, especially for the readers of this scene, is also assisted by what Karen Bassi calls a practice of visualisation.[48] The Watchman speaks about what he sees and what he wants to see, the roof (2), the night-stars' assembly (4–6), the beacon fire (7, 21–22). The narrative invites us to visualise the roof, the stars, and the beacon light through a 'watching' act rather than necessarily through stage action.[49] Lines 22–24 find us unprepared and take us by surprise because they follow immediately after the Watchman has expressed for the second time his wish for the arrival of the beacon light (20–21).[50] Then, we become surprised by the visitation of the future.

In the prologue of the *Libation Bearers* (1–21), as in the prologue of the *Agamemnon*, the appearance of the speaker is accompanied by the emergence of another surprising event which is instrumental for what follows. In this case, we have Orestes' presence (1–9) which is overshadowed by Electra's appearance (10–21). Of course, Orestes' appearance may also be experienced as a surprise as well, as the starting point of this second play is completely unknown to us: the *Agamemnon* ends with Orestes in exile, while several references to his

[48] Bassi (2005) 260–64.

[49] On staging issues, see Taplin (1977) 276–77.

[50] For this as the Watchman's *future present*, see 4.2.1.

return (877–86, 1280–85, 1646–48, 1667) do not necessarily anticipate his being the principal speaker in the prologue right from the beginning of the *Libation Bearers*.

As soon as the play begins and we learn that the man who prays at Agamemnon's tomb (4) is Orestes who has just returned to his homeland,[51] the ceremonial sense of these lines is interrupted by a sight from a distance (10–16):

> What's this I see? Whatever is this company of women approaching, | so conspicuous in their black dress? What misfortune am I to picture from it? Has some new disaster befallen this house, or | would I be right in guessing that these women bring libations for | my father, appeasements of the dead? It could never be anything | else! Why, I think my sister Electra is there too, conspicuous | in bitter grief. O Zeus! Grant me vengeance for my father's | death! Be my ally if you will!

The first element of surprise appears in line 10 and has to do with the arrival of a group of women. It is followed by a second and more important one in line 16 when Electra is identified among the women. The sight of the group of women approaching disrupts and unsettles Orestes and his initial planning, while also cancelling any expectations we may have about his moves. The moment Orestes recognises his sister among the women, he communicates this information, while the necessity for another readjustment to the new circumstances for the future becomes apparent.

Moving on to the *Eumenides*, its prologue (1–63) consists of two monologues by Pythia (1–32, 33–63), which turn out to be two contrasting halves, separated by hiatus,[52] whose form and content work against continuity and are strikingly contradictory. Pythia presents aetiologically and honours the previous residents of the temple of Apollo at Delphi (1–33).[53] Her appearance is identified with tranquillity, solemnity, and a sense of control, all created by her spiritual status. However, this sense of order is interrupted in line 33. Below, I quote the end of the first part of Pythia's speech and the beginning of the second (30–33, 34–38):

[51] On the textual issues of the *Libation Bearers*' prologue, see Chapter 6 n. 16.

[52] For a detailed analysis of the hiatus in the *Eumenides*' prologue, see Taplin (1977) 362–63.

[53] On the succession myth in Delphi, see Bowie (1993) 14–16; Podlecki (1989) 129; Sommerstein (1989) 80–81.

> And now I wish they may grant me better success by far than | at my entrances before. If there are any here from among the | Greeks, let them come as the lot assigns them, in the normal | way; for I give my prophecies as the god may lead me.
>
> Terrifying! Terrifying to describe, and to see with one's | eyes-things to send me back out of Loxias' house, so that I | have no strength and cannot stand upright. I am running on | my hands, without the quickness of feet and legs. An old | woman in terror is nothing- no more than a child!

Although the prologue starts as expository, it 'gives way to terror'.[54] Pythia, despite her being the representation of legitimacy, departs in the middle of the prologue only to unexpectedly reappear after the hiatus. In this context, Taplin notes:

> This is unique in surviving Greek tragedy, which generally abhors a vacuum, and nearly always preserves continuity . . . The first half shows a pious routine which is the outcome of a peaceful Delphic tradition; the second vividly conveys the abhorrent and incomprehensible disruption which the Erinyes have brought into this orderly Delphic world.[55]

In the lines that follow the hiatus (34–63), another element of surprise comes from Pythia's detailed description of the terrifying Furies and the bloodstained Orestes. I provide a separate discussion of those lines under 'Surprise through shock' below (7.4.3).

There is no obvious reason why the *Proteus* would be an exception to the fashion of introducing surprising elements in the prologue. Those elements must have been accompanied by the arrival of the chorus, inviting audience to see from a new perspective. Having Menelaus open the satyr drama could well have been a succesful technique in terms of generating major surprise at the very beginning of the play. It can be assumed that one

[54] Goward (1999) 60.

[55] Taplin (1977) 362.

might have seen Menelaus as castaway at the shores of Egypt. This would have arguably caused major surprise, as we would not have heard about Menelaus since the Messenger's speech in the *Agamemnon* (636–80), where the overall uncertainty for his survival reduced the possibility of his stage appearance. The appearance of the chorus expressing curiosity and their encounter with Menelaus might have been suitable material to position the audience at a state of amazement.[56]

In all three cases, possibly in the case of *Proteus* as well, the opening lines are not primarily preoccupied with the exposition of information about the past or present of the story. Although this type of prologue would facilitate in a more direct way the readers' and the spectators' immersion, Aeschylus' prologues remain focused on the future and seize the opportunity to engage the readers and spectators by bringing in conflict, disorder, and dissonance.

7.3.2. Surprise through off-stage action

Another type of eliciting surprise is associated with the emergence of off-stage events, and, more specifically, those that are brought to light and strike us through cries.[57] This simultaneous presentation of off-stage events is possibly Aeschylus' innovation, and here we find one of its first uses in surviving tragedy.[58] According to Goward, this device is 'another distinct narrative temporal category in tragedy, when an off-stage event is overheard, reported, and reacted to by those on stage'.[59] (I discuss Cassandra's *on-stage* cries under 7.4.2. 'Surprise through small-scale changes' below). Nooter also argues that the employment of screams from off-stage 'communicates frightening possibilities that cannot otherwise be shown to the audience.'[60]

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[56] In this respect, Lissarague (1990, 235) argues: 'Frequently the subject of the play is tied to a discovery or an invention'.

[57] On the broad issue of voice in Aeschylus, see Nooter (2017). For a list of off-stage cries in Greek tragedy, see Markantonatos (2002) 12–13 n. 31. See also Hamilton (1987) who provides a review of relevant scholarship and attempts to create a model based on off-stage cries and murders. However, none of the previous studies include the Furies' off-stage cries in the *Eumenides*.

[58] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 1343–71, Arnott (1982) 38, Taplin (1977) 323. Hamilton (1987, 598) argues that *Agamemnon* is not the first play where off-stage cries are employed.

[59] Goward (1999) 2. For examples of simultaneous presentation of events in Greek tragedy, see Goward (1999) 32–35.

[60] Nooter (2017) 28.

This section discusses how the three examples of off-stage cries we have in the *Oresteia*, by Agamemnon in the *Agamemnon* (1343, 1345), by Aegisthus in the *Libation Bearers* (869), and by the Furies in the *Eumenides* (117, 120, 123, 126, 129) are instrumental in generating surprise. What is distinctive in this technique is that surprise is not generated through the primary narrative (as in 7.3.1 above). Rather, the surprising element lies within a secondary narrative which rises from the background. This sudden and abrupt transmission of information substitutes, or in Goward's words, 'obviates' the need for a messenger speech in the most compelling manner.[61] The result is to take readers and spectators by even greater surprise.

In the *Agamemnon*, although the event of Agamemnon's death itself is not surprising, especially after Cassandra's prophecies (1072–330), the emergence of his cries in lines 1343 and 1345 strikes us due to two elements: our ignorance of how Agamemnon's murder will materialise and our unpreparedness at this specific point in the play:

ὤμοι, πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω. 1343

O-oh! I have been struck deep, a fatal blow!

ὤμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις δευτέραν πεπληγμένος. 1345

O-oh! Again! Struck a second blow!

These lines come after a choral prelude (1331–42), where the Chorus reflects on Cassandra's prophecies and on a possible reversal of fortune for Agamemnon. Although Agamemnon captured the city of Troy and retuned safe to his house (1335–37), he may now die paying for past crimes (1338–40). The transition from the Chorus' reflective tone to Agamemnon's cries is rapid and abrupt. With his two off-stage cries, Agamemnon himself delivers the news of his murder both through inarticulate cries (the interjections ὤμοι) and, then, immediately through logically formed utterances. What these utterances reveal is that he has been struck with a weapon. What they do not disclose is the identity of the murderer. This preserves the surprising element of line 1372, when Clytemnestra herself appears standing over the dead

[61] Goward (1999) 32.

bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra (see above 7.3.3. 'Surprise through unexpected appearances' and below 7.4.3. 'Surprise through shock'). The Chorus' reaction to the abrupt visitation of the future comes in 1344 after the first cry ('Quiet! Who shouted of a blow, as if dealt a fatal wound?'[62]), while after the second cry they split into twelve voices, a striking unprecedented stage event which will be discussed in 7.4.2 below ('Surprise through small-scale changes').

Moving on to the *Libation Bearers*, although Orestes' plan to kill Aegisthus was exposed in detail (554–78), preparing for what is to come (see 5.3.3), Aegisthus' cry coming from off-stage strikes readers and spectators with its briefness and immediacy (869):

ἔ ἔ, ὀτοτοτοῖ.

Ah-ah! Ototototoi![63]

Since line 854 when Aegisthus went into the palace, his murder was a matter of time. However, we were unaware *how* his murder would materialise and *how* the news of that murder would be communicated to us. This is further intensified by the intervention of the preceding choral song (855–68), whose dramatic function is similar to the function of the choral song we saw in the example of the *Agamemnon* above. The Chorus here pray to Zeus and express their agony for the outcome of Orestes' fight, introducing an element of uncertainty that increases our suspense. The Chorus' reaction shows that the cry finds them unprepared ('What? What's that? | How do things stand? How has it been determined in the house?' 870–71). Even when we finally hear Aegisthus' cry of pain, the information it conveys is minimal. Unlike Agamemnon who complements his inarticulate cries with articulate utterances, Aegisthus provides no explanation of what is happening. Even the identity of victim remains unclear until 887.[64]

[62] In trochaic tetrameter catalectic whose effect is to 'quicken the tempo at moments of high tension', as Raeburn & Thomas (2011) 244.

[63] Sommerstein's translation (2008), see n. 31 Chapter 4.

[64] Garvie (1986, 364) argues that line 869 is less likely to be unmetrical. Agamemnon's cry above (1343, 1345) seems to be more fitted in the iambic metre. This contributes to its informational character, while Aegisthus' cry creates the uncertainty of who is being murdered.

In the final example which comes from the *Eumenides*, the Furies' off-stage cries in lines 117, 120, 123, 126, 129, and 130 strike our attention as the first signs of their imminent appearance in line 140.[65] Although most of those cries are based on ancient staging directions (παρεπιγραφή),[66] their authenticity is not questionable. They are an element of simultaneous narration similar to the cries of Agamemnon and Aegisthus we have seen above. The Furies' off-stage cries come as responses to the persistent urging by the ghost of Clytemnestra, whose appearance in 94 constitutes another element of surprise as discussed under section 'Surprise through unexpected appearances' below (7.3.3). The words μυγμός ('moan' in 117, 120, 129) and ὠγμός ('groan' in 123, 126) represent the Furies' sounds as they start to awaken by Clytemnestra's orders.[67] The accumulative effect of their successive responses leads to major surprise when they articulate their excitement in words (130):

(μυγμὸς διπλοῦς ὀξύς)
λαβέ, λαβέ, λαβέ, λαβέ· φράζου.

Seize! Seize! Seize! Seize! Put your mind to it!

After Pythia's description of the Furies in the prologue (46–59), engaging with their off-stage cries instead of their on-stage appearance is totally unexpected. What is even more striking, by contrast to the other two plays, is that there is no on-stage reaction to those off-stage cries: the audience and the readers are their only addressees. Despite their powerful effect, what those cries do not adequately prepare for is the *when* and *how* of the Furies' appearance, which I will discuss in the section 7.3.3 below.

I have shown how off-stage cries prepare for key moments of the plot: Agamemnon's murder in the *Agamemnon*, Aegisthus' murder in the *Libation Bearers*, and the Furies' imminent entrance in the stage in the *Eumenides*. They prepare for such key moments by being

[65] Flickinger (1939) is one of the few studies which discuss, very briefly though (357–59), the Furies' cries in the context of off-stage cries. On the arguments of the Furies' appearance on stage in line 140, Chapter 6 n. 112.

[66] Taplin (1977) 15 n. 1 & 371 n. 3. See also Sommerstein (1989) on 117.

[67] The word μυγμός could have been represented as μυ μυ in the Greek text and the word ὠγμός as ὦ ὤ. See Sommerstein (2008) 369 n. 39, 371 n. 41; Collard (2002) on 117–29; Taplin (1977) 94.

unexpected, by being abrupt, by expanding the performance space, and by revealing information only partially in ways that pave the way for more surprises to come.

7.3.3. Surprise through unexpected appearances

This section discusses how surprise is generated by the unexpected onstage appearance of several characters. Apart from the appearances themselves as surprising elements, each appearance bears several connotations and develops complications related to the future of plot. What follows is only a selection of surprising appearances, as, first, an extensive discussion of all entrances would lie beyond the purposes of my discussion, and, second, such a discussion has been offered by Taplin's comprehensive study on stagecraft in Aeschylus (1977). The examples I include here constitute cases of *distinctively* striking appearances for which we have not been adequately prepared or which challenge any pre-existent expectations. I discuss from the *Agamemnon* the unexpected appearances of Clytemnestra (587, 1372), Cassandra (782), and Aegisthus (1577); from the *Libation Bearers* the appearances of Clytemnestra (668), Cilissa (730), and Aegisthus (838); from the *Eumenides* I include those of Clytemnestra's ghost (94), the Furies (140, 244), and the secondary chorus which participate at the final procession (1003).

Three striking elements feature in Clytemnestra's appearance in line 587 of the *Agamemnon*: interruption, intervention, and domination. First, by contrast to her entrance in line 258 where, 'if anyone but Clytemnestra were to have entered at this point, it would have been an extremely surprising turn',[68] her arrival from inside the palace in 587 is totally unexpected due to the fact that the Herald who has completed his speech (582) is about to enter, following the Chorus' advice (584–86): 'This news | naturally concerns the house, however, and Clytemnestra | especially.' Not only does she interrupt the herald's entrance due to the incisive character of her appearance,[69] but she also obstructs it and determines the unfolding of events through her intervening power. Our surprise intensifies during her speech that follows (587–614). In those lines, she demonstrates her control over the release of

[68] Taplin (1977) 285.

[69] Taplin (1977) 289.

information, both when present and absent.[70] In this sense, these elements influence even more our expectation for the future.

Clytemnestra's appearance in line 1372 is also striking for similar reasons. First, it is again abrupt and interrupts another character's planned action, the Chorus', who, alarmed by off-stage Agamemnon's earlier off-stage cries (1343, 1345), is about to enter the palace in order to investigate (1346–71). Second, it is not only the timing of her appearance that creates surprise, but also its content, as the mystery of the *whodunit* question is finally resolved. The mystery of the *how* will also be soon resolved (see below under 7.4.3. 'Surprise through shock'). Although several elements of foreboding since the beginning of the play function as preparatory devices (most notably Cassandra's clear prophecy about Agamemnon's imminent murder), Clytemnestra's entrance standing over the dead bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra takes us by surprise not only for its compelling character but also for its consequences on the future.

The next case from the *Agamemnon* under examination refers to Cassandra's first appearance on stage (782) which takes place without any preparation. Although she enters with Agamemnon who is magnificently announced by the Chorus (almost thirty lines before he speaks in 810), there are no textual references to Cassandra's presence in their speech or in anyone else's. The first reference to Cassandra comes at line 1035 when she is finally addressed by Clytemnestra. This technique of withholding information about Cassandra is what leads us to the second and, even more intense, surprise, when Cassandra finally breaks her silence in line 1072. By contrast to Clytemnestra's previous appearances which were unexpected and unannounced (discussed above), Cassandra has been on stage for more than 160 lines before she is addressed (1035) and almost 200 lines before she speaks (1072). Further details of this scene that take us beyond the issue of Cassandra's entrance will be discussed under 'Surprise through small-scale changes' below (7.4.2).

Nobody is expecting a new character to enter the stage less than a hundred lines before the end of a play. However, this is precisely what we get with Aegisthus' appearance in line 1577, before the end of the *Agamemnon* (1673). The main events, the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra, have materialised, the identity of the murderer has been revealed, and it looks

[70] Taplin (1977) 300.

like we move towards closure. However, Aegisthus will create surprise not only through his late arrival, but also by provoking a response by the Chorus which includes references to Orestes' return (1280–85, 1646–48, 1667). Those references create anticipation for the second play, while also undermining the sense of closure of the present play (as discussed in 3.3). Additionally, Aegisthus' appearance is totally unexpected 'due to the minimal attention paid to him in the play so far' (which itself is, of course, a surprising departure from earlier literary and artistic depictions of the myth).[71] Both his late entry and any lack of preparation demonstrate how surprise in Aeschylus is again elevated to a dramatic technique fully integrated into the plot[72] and linked to the idea of an open future.

Moving on to the *Libation Bearers*, the appearance of Clytemnestra in line 668, when Orestes and Pylades, disguised, stand by the door, comes across as completely unexpected. This is a consequence of Orestes' preceding speech which is addressed to the doorman (658–66):

> Take a message to the masters of the house; they're | the ones I've come to, and with news! Be quick! Besides, | night's dark chariot is hurrying on, and it's the hour for | travellers to let their anchor down in a house open to guests. | Have someone with authority in the house come out, the lady | in charge—but a man is more seemly: the constraints of | conversation blur one's words; a man speaks to another | man with confidence and reveals his meaning with clarity.

Although the beginning of the quote does not create any expectation for Clytemnestra to appear, some lines later, especially lines 663–64, such possibility begins to arise ('Have someone…come out…'). However, even at this point Orestes' preference to meet a woman gives way to his stronger preference to meet a man. After this, as Garvie notes, 'Aegisthus should be in our minds when the door opens, and it is C. who appears.'[73] In this instance and

[71] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) 231; Taplin (1977) 327. See also n. 70 in the Introduction.

[72] See Taplin (1977, 327–28) where he discusses Aegisthus' surprising appearance in the *Agamemnon* as an undervalued Aeschylus' technique.

[73] Garvie (1986) in 666–67 & (1976) 79. See also Taplin (1977) 342.

also in the other examples from the *Libation Bearers*, surprise is generated by the thwarting of expectations.

I will discuss the next two cases of unexpected appearances in the *Libation Bearers* as interrelated. The first has to do with Cilissa's appearance (730) whose unexpectedness lies in the fact that we are (again) unprepared. Additionally, as Orestes, Pylades, and Clytemnestra have already entered the palace at 718, what we are expecting for is the news of a murder to have taken place, possibly communicated through off-stage cries.[74] Instead, Cilissa's appearance works anticlimactically, disrupting the tension that has been built so far in the scene. The second case refers to Aegisthus' appearance at 838. After the scene with the Chorus and Cilissa (730–82) and the following choral song (783–837), our expectation for the news of Aegisthus' murder not only remains unfulfilled but it is also prolonged by the appearance on stage of Aegisthus himself, who remains on stage until the Chorus find a way to persuade him.

The first example of unexpected appearances in the *Eumenides* refers to the ghost of Clytemnestra. Its emergence on stage at line 94 is entirely unexpected taking into account the preceding events both in this play and the *Libation Bearers*.[75] The fact that her death was so central to the previous play obviously prevents us from anticipating her reappearance. To understand how striking is Clytemenstra's reappearance from the dead in the *Eumenides* we also need to take into account the fact that the *Libation Bearers* had built expectations for the reappearance of Agamemnon as a ghost (through the continuous invocations by Electra, Orestes, and the Chorus, 315–22, 331–39, 345–54, 363–71, 456–57, 479–82). However, those expectations were never fulfilled, as the dead Agamemnon never appeared above his tomb.[76] The ghost of Clytemnestra shows up after Orestes and Apollo have left the stage, and in doing so it postpones the Furies' appearance for the second time (with Orestes' and Apollo's appearance after Pythia's compelling description in the prologue, 34–59, having been a first postponement). The emergence of the striking ghost creates both uncertainty for how the plot will proceed and anticipation for what will happen next.

[74] Hamilton (1987) 591 n. 13.

[75] On the staging of Clytemnestra's ghost, see Taplin (1977) 365–67. See also Sommerstein (2008) 367 n. 32 & (1989) in 94.

[76] Garvie (1986) in 306–478. See also Garvie (2009) 260, on the appearance of Darius' ghost in the *Persians*.

As mentioned in 7.2 above, the first appearance of the Furies in the *Eumenides* has attracted critical attention since antiquity. However, as a result of Aristophanes' *Frogs* and the *Life of Aeschylus* all attention seems to have been directed to issues of performance and to spectatorial reactions to it, when, in fact, this is only one aspect of a more complex set of surprising elements around the entrance of the Chorus. First, the Furies do not appear by their own will, but as a result of Clytemnestra's intervention. This is surprising, not least because they have been mentioned several times in the previous plays (for example *Agamemnon* 1189–92, *Libation Bearers* 1049, 1061) and now in this play in Pythia's speech in the prologue (46–52) and also through their own off-stage cries (see 7.3.2 above). Second, they turn out to be asleep (94), when one would expect them to be fiercely pursuing Orestes. Third, they enter the stage gradually from line 140 and on,[77] from all around (σποράδην), rather than in the orderly manner in which the Chorus is expected to enter the stage.[78] They are striking not only in visual but also in aural terms, as they do not sing in unison (143–48; 148–78).[79] Fourth, at the point that we would expect them to display their full force, we are presented with another surprising moment. Their exit from the stage at 231 and their subsequent reappearance, although dramatically motivated, are nevertheless striking, challenging dramatic conventions for the continuous presence of the tragic Chorus.[80] A similar shattering of the expected order takes place at lines 1348–71 of the *Agamemnon*, which will be discussed under 7.4.2 below ('Surprise through small-scale changes').

The final example of this section comes from the procession in the last lines of the exit scene of the *Eumenides* (1003–32, 1032–37). This example generates a type of surprise different from what we have seen so far for mainly two reasons. First, the unexpected appearances of new characters emerge rather late in the plot, in line 1003, around 70 lines before the end of

[77] On the issue of *when* the Furies enter the stage, see Chapter 6, n. 112.

[78] On a perceptive comment about the Furies' disorderly entrance, see Nooter (2017) 259.

[79] Sommerstein (2008) 374–75 n. 46, (1989) 109. The metrical analysis of their entrance song, mixed iambic-dochmiac metre, as opposed to the more conventional anapaestic metre for the entrance songs in Aeschylus. Docmiacs manifests extreme distress. See Sommerstein (1989) in 143–78.

[80] See for example, Brown (1983) 23. For scholarly attitudes to the breaking of this convention in this scene: see Arnott (1982, 35) & (1973, 54 and n. 2) who treats it as an exception to what becomes a norm only in Euripides; Taplin (1977, 375–76, 378) who discusses it only in terms of how motivated it is dramatically ('explicit lapse of time'). Note that the Chorus in the *Agamemnon* also attempted to leave the stage to enter the palace and investigate the reason behind Agamemnon's cries, but that was suspended by Clytemnestra's abrupt appearance (See section 7.3.3).

the play. A similarly late appearance was also Aegisthus' in the *Agamemnon* who entered in line 1577, less than a hundred lines before the end. However, as discussed above,[81] although unexpected, his presence serves dramatic reasons which are clearly related to the future of the plot. In the case of the *Eumenides*, the late appearance of new characters and the possibility of a formation of a secondary chorus are linked to the matter of closure as explored in Chapter 3 (section 3.5). Second, the appearance of multiple new characters on stage which will escort the Awesome Goddesses to their new home is unprecedented. Although there is little paratextual evidence of the staging of this final scene, the textual evidence is startling. Lines 1005, 1010, 1024, and 1028 suggest that the procession consists of the priestess of Athena, two adult assistants, a number of temple-servants, and, possibly, the jurors of the Areopagus court.[82] This visually compelling procession features torch lights (1005) and red robes (1028) as the Furies' new attire (7.4.2. 'Surprise through small-scale changes'). This, which comes as a result of the Furies' surprising agreement with Athena (7.4.1. 'Surprise through reversals', below) draws our attention to the multiple characters that suddenly fill the stage, as we reflect on the possible implications of this celebratory ending.

To conclude: this section has explored three techniques in surprise through narrative progression, surprise at the beginning of the play (7.3.1), through off-stage cries (7.3.2), and through unexpected appearances (7.3.3). These techniques demonstrate how the introduction of new information at various points in the dramatic narrative of the three plays elicits surprise through the abruptness and the unexpectedness of the future, and thwarting of expectations. At the same time, they are instrumental in bringing *closer* the materialisation of the main events, which is their main difference from the techniques of surprise to be explored in the section that follows.

7.4. Surprise and narrative misdirection

Moving on from surprise through narrative progression to surprise through narrative misdirection, the examples below show how the introduction of new information can be used

[81] See p. 193.

[82] Sommerstein (2008) 477, 483; Collard (2002) in 1004–6; Taplin (1977) 410–11.

for reversals, other types of change, and for the cause of shock. In this sense, it can contribute to misdirection, uncertainty, and confusion instead of clarity.

7.4.1. Surprise through reversals

Aristotle in the *Poetics* introduces the term περιπέτεια as the reversal of a character's fortune from good to bad. In what follows, drawing on the theoretical background outlined in 7.2 above, I use the term 'reversal' as an attribute of narrative created by unforeseeable events around which the plot is structured. More specifically, I will look at a small sample of reversals constructed to maximise surprise: from the *Libation Bearers* Orestes' hesitation before the matricide (899) and his pursuit by the Furies after the matricide (1048–50), and from the *Eumenides* the reversals of the voting in Orestes' trial (752–53) and of the Furies' acceptance of Athena's suggestion (916). I also touch on *Proteus* and the question of how it may have also employed reversals in the course of its plot. I do not offer an example from the *Agamemnon*: I argue that in that play surprise is generated through other techniques (see 7.3.1, 7.3.2, and 7.3.3 above; 7.4.2 and 7.4.3 below).

One of the most compelling moments of the *Oresteia* develops when we witness Orestes suddenly hesitating at the certainty of the imminent matricide (899):

> Pylades, what am I to do? Is such respect to stop me from killing my mother?

Our surprise is generated by both the form and the content of Orestes' utterance. First, Orestes turns to his friend who has been so far a silent character (see 7.4.2 below). Second, Orestes asks a *genuine* question by employing the non-rhetorical subjunctive deliberative (κτείνω) instead of the future indicative.[83]

Nothing of what preceded this scene prepares us for Orestes' hesitation. The first half of the play features the clear demonstration of Orestes' and Electra's determination to commit Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' murders. Although Orestes exposes the details of the murder of Aegisthus without revealing any details about how he plans to commit the matricide, this

[83] Garvie (1986) 293.

does not shed any doubts on his determination to kill Clytemnestra. On the contrary, it increases the suspense about *how* this will finally take place.[84] Orestes' hesitation powerfully forces us to reconfigure our expectations and accept that Clytemnestra might not be murdered.[85] However, this disorientation will not last. In the following lines, Pylades will bring everything back in track, by causing another surprise (900–2), as we will discuss in the next section.

The second reversal in the *Libation Bearers* takes place a few lines before the end of the play (1076), when a strong dramatic twist startles audience and readers (1048–50):

> A-a-ah! These grim women here | -like Gorgons with their dark clothing and snakes twined | thickly in their hair! I can't stay here longer!

Although less than thirty lines before the end of the play, the visitation of Furies constitutes a major plot reversal. By killing his mother Orestes saved himself from the Furies of his father, but he is now pursued by the Furies of his mother (which is completely independent of whether or not Orestes actually sees the Furies[86]), until his forced exit in 1062 (1053–54, 1057–58, 1061–62):

> They are not fancies to me, the torments I have here: | these are clearly my mother's rancorous fury-hounds.
>
> Lord Apollo, here they are, multiplying now! | They drip and trickle from their eyes—loathsome!
> You don't see them yourselves, but I can see them! | I'm being driven, I tell you; I can't stay here longer!

[84] Garvie (1976) 77–78. See 6.3.1 'Suspense through the exposition of future planning'.

[85] See also section under 5.4.1. 'Nodal points'.

[86] Garvie (1986) in 1048.

The emergence of the Furies finds us completely unprepared. Previously, Orestes and Pylades had forced Clytemnestra inside the palace (after line 930), while a choral song followed their departure (931–34), similar to the choral songs before Aegisthus' murder (855–68) and before Agamemnon's murder in the *Agamemnon* (1331–42). Orestes returns on stage as a winner, displaying his two victims, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and justifying his acts with a speech, with Chorus' approval to follow (971–1047). The lines just before the appearance of the Furies are representative of the overall sense of the murders as acts of restoration of order and not as acts of destruction (1044–47):

> But what you did was good; and do not let your lips | be linked to damaging speech, nor put your tongue to things | of bad omen, now you have set all Argos' city free by your | clean severance of the two snakes' heads.

However, this development of events, although broadly in line with our expectations, is violently interrupted by the Furies' unexpected visitation. The process of restoration of order and return to stability of the house of the Atreides has been abruptly suspended once again. Both the address to a hitherto mute Pylades (899) and the unexpected appearance of the Furies (1076) feature surprises near the ending of the play which lead to misdirection, by contrast to surprises at the beginning of the play, which, as we have above (7.3.1), are linked to narrative progression.

Moving on to the *Eumenides*, the first example of reversal is found at the scene of Orestes' trial, and, more specifically, at the point when the outcome of the voting is announced which turns out to be surprisingly anti-climactic (752–53):

> The man here goes free on the charge of bloodshed. | The numbers of the votes are equal.

This is the conclusion of a trial process which commenced in line 566, when Athena re-entered the stage with the citizens as jurors. After almost two hundred lines of arguments between Apollo and Orestes from one side, and the Furies from the other, the jurors and Athena cast their votes. The possibility of equal votes was first raised by Athena earlier, based on her

argument in favour of the superiority of fatherhood over motherhood: 'And Orestes wins even if in the judgement he has equal votes' (741). With Athena having established a new system and appointed jurors, one would expect them to produce a clear verdict. On the contrary, these are all overshadowed by Athena's intervention.[87] Although that intervention does not frustrate our expectations that Orestes will be acquitted, it nevertheless contributes to misdirection. This misdirection is justified by the fact that it causes confusion and disorientation to the readers and the audience, as it moves them away from closure, opens up the possibility of an alternative outcome, and takes us to a section of the play beyond Orestes' departure. As Garvie notes, 'the whole plot changes after Orestes' acquittal'.[88] This leads on to another reversal to which I turn next.

The Furies fully accept Athena's proposition to incorporate into the Athenian civic life as newly established Awesome Goddesses, by contrast to what they threatened earlier at the prospect of Orestes' acquittal. The first signs of this reversal take place through their question 'Queen Athena, what abode do you say I have?' (892), while some lines later they announce their decision to radically alter their earlier future plans (916–26):

> 'I shall accept a home with Pallas, | and I shall not dishonour | this city which Zeus the almighty and Ares | hold as god's outpost; | they delight in its guarding the altars of Greek deities. | For this city I make my prayer, | and prophesy with kind intent | good fortune in profusion to benefit its life, | burgeoning up from the earth | in sunshine's bright gleam.

This comes as a great surprise for the spectators and readers, as they would have expected the Furies to materialise their threats. That would have been consistent with their repetitive and constant threats as they feature from the beginning of the play. However, the play concludes with the Furies being convinced to take up residence in Athens and safeguard the city (see also 7.4.2 below).

[87] See Sommerstein (2010b).

[88] Garvie (1976) 81.

Both reversals in the *Eumenides* attract our attention through misdirection. First, we are convinced to expect that the main and single event is Orestes' acquittal, and, second, we are taken by surprise by another event which follows up and leads the plot to its end. Our focus, therefore, shifts from one key event of the plot (Orestes' acquittal) to another key event which comes as a surprise (the Furies' willing protection of Athens). In this context, Bacon comments that 'the *Oresteia* culminates not, as one might expect, in the resolution of the problems of Agamemnon's heir in Argos, but in the establishment of a chorus of Furies in a new home in Athens'.[89] This transition takes place through the two reversals discussed above and drives the plot to a surprising outcome.

Finally, turning to *Proteus* it would be plausible to assume that reversals played an important role in it. Events that could have generated reversals are, for example, Menelaus' encounter with Proteus' daughter, Eido. If the satyr drama followed the *Odyssey* (Book 4, 351–580), Eido could have been the one who informed Menelaus about her father's prophetic skill and how to force him to exercise this skill and to predict Menelaus' future. As Marshall suggests, Proteus' transformations could have been either communicated to the audience through a messenger's speech or, even more strikingly, represented on stage through Proteus' reappearances with a different mask each time, 'as an aggressive theatrical coup', which, despite our limited evidence, we could claim it 'would, without doubt, be a bold theatrical gesture'.[90] Moreover, when Menelaus manages to find Proteus, his successive transformations must have also been startling and confusing for the audience who would look forward to learning about Menelaus' rescue and future. When Menelaus finally captures Proteus, another reversal might have been included in Proteus' prophetic words. Although this event brings us closer to the materialisation of Menelaus' *nostos*, it does not preclude the possibility of other reversals which could have obstructed not only his return to Sparta, but also the return to a normal life.

Surprises through reversals is one of the most compelling ways to capture readers' and spectators' attention not by inviting them to anticipate the future, but rather by driving them to clash with the unpredictability of the future. In both the *Libation Bearers* and the

[89] Bacon (2001) 48.

[90] Marshall (2015) 87.

Eumenides this reversal of expectations comes at the very end of the plot and creates a sense that the plays themselves may know more than we do.

7.4.2. Surprise through small-scale changes

While the previous section dealt with how surprise contributes to major reversals within key events of the plot, I now turn to how surprise plays a role through smaller-scale changes. I am dealing with aspects of the development of the characters which create surprise in the sense of puzzlement and uncertainty as to how the plot will advance: I discuss Cassandra and Pylades as seemingly mute characters who break their silence in the *Agamemnon* (1072) and the *Libation Bearers* (900) respectively. I also look at the Chorus' split after Agamemnon's cries (1346–71) in the *Agamemnon*. Finally, I focus on changes in the depiction of the characters of Apollo (574, 777) and the Furies (1026–27) in the *Eumenides*.

While in section 7.3.2 above I showed how surprise is generated by the employment off-stage cries, the examples of Cassandra and Pylades show how surprise can be generated by silence.[91] The matter of silences in Aeschylus has been the focus of critical attention since antiquity according to both Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where the silent characters of Achilles (in the lost plays *Myrmidons* and *Phrygians*) and Niobe (in the lost play *Niobe*) are mentioned, and the *Life of Aeschylus*.[92] Despite Aristophanes' comic exaggeration, it is evident that the employment of silences in the *Oresteia* is raised to a device capable of evoking the dramatic effects of suspense and surprise. While suspense is achieved through the sustaining of silence, surprise is attained through its breaking.

In the *Agamemnon*, Cassandra, who has remained silent for 300 lines (781–1072), is transformed into a character who breaks her silence, not through speaking, but through dramatically powerful but inarticulate cries. These cries accompany the realisation of the vast knowledge of past, present and, more significantly, future she possesses (1072–73):

[91] On silences in Aeschylus, see Taplin (1972). See also Podlecki (2013) 133. On silences in Greek culture in general, see Montiglio (2000).

[92] Aristophanes' *Frogs* 911–13; *Life* 6. See Taplin (1972) 58–76.

Ototototoi, popoi, dah! | Apollo! Apollo![93]

What has preceded makes Cassandra's outburst even more striking. Although Garvie notes that Cassandra *is expected* to speak, with us being unaware *when* she is expected to speak, I argue that, at least until line 1035, Cassandra is mostly considered a silent character, as our attention has never been directed to her. For instance, Agamemnon refers to her without raising any expectations that is likely to speak (950–55). Even when he departs (972), the emphasis does not shift to Cassandra who is left on the stage, but to his imminent murder.[94] However, after line 1035, the expectation of her becoming a speaking character, and of Aeschylus third speaking actor,[95] starts to grow, when other characters address her (Clytemnestra in lines 1035, 1039, and 1059; the Chorus in lines 1047 and 1053–54). When she finally speaks in 1072, our expectations materialise. However, this materialisation does not adequately prepare for the way Cassandra breaks her silence.[96] Her transformation from a silent character to one who delivers inarticulate cries and who the Chorus initially assumes she is unable to understand Greek, offers an unprecedented experience for those who engage with her performance.

By contrast to Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* whose scene is prolonged for more than 250 lines (1072–330), Pylades' transformation in the *Libation Bearers* from a mute character to a speaking one lasts for only one line. Pylades' prompt and direct answer to Orestes' desperate question brings the plot back to its path and revives the audience's anticipation that the matricide will take place in the imminent future (900–2):[97]

[93] Sommerstein's translation (2008), see n. 31 in Chapter 4. Collard (2002, 147, n. 1072=1076) explains his attempt to reproduce this cry in a way that knowledge of Greek is not required. On Cassandra's cries, see further, see Nooter (2017, 44–45 and n. 93); Prins (2005, 165); Heirman (1975) 258–59.

[94] Montiglio (2000) 213.

[95] Knox (1972) 114: 'Aeschylus has taken the third actor Sophocles introduced to make the dialogue more flexible, complicated, and realistic, and used him to make the drama transcend the limits of space and time.'

[96] See also Woolf (1925/1994) where she vividly describes Cassandra's cry with a focus of its contribution to provoke surprise for the readers and spectators due to its intensity and immediacy.

[97] Goward (1999) 67.

> Then where's the future for Loxias' oracles, | delivered by the Pythia, and the pledges sworn on oath? | Think of all men as your enemies rather than the gods!

Although the technique of the third actor was not probably a complete innovation in 458 BCE,[98] and Aeschylus also uses it earlier in the case of Cassandra, its employment for Pylades in the *Libation Bearers* is instrumental for the generation of a type of surprise that Knox calls a 'dramatic explosion'.[99] Effectively, this moment brings closely together two equally powerful but distinct types of surprise. Orestes' hesitation (7.4.1) takes us away from the matricide. Pylades' unexpected interjection (900–2) brings us back to it in a way that we could not have anticipated.

Although both Cassandra's and Pylades' breakings of their silence work as catalysts to how surprise is generated, they do so differently. While Cassandra's transition from a silent character to a speaking one is extraordinary in its intensity and time span, and lies 'between the articulate and the inarticulate',[100] Pylades' transition is brief, articulate, and full of logic and pragmatism. Although Pylades' response resolves the situation and accelerates the plot towards the matricide, it creates a sense of misdirection in relation to our expectations associated with Pylades' role.[101] In both cases we are dealing with an intervention which is unanticipated and intense. In the case of Cassandra that intensity is due to its length, whereas in the case of Pylades' that intensity is due to Pylades' brevity. While, according to Taplin, only Cassandra's (and not Pylades') silence is a proper 'Aeschylean silence',[102] I argue that in both cases the employment of silence is responsible for the development of one of the most powerful dramatic effects, the effect of surprise, which through the elements of the unexpected and the abrupt forces one to address the question of what it is involved in dealing with an open future.

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[98] Knox (1972) 106–7.

[99] Knox (1972) 109. See also Halleran (2005) 172. Mastronarde (1979, 92) also argues for the intervention of a third party as a way of diversion, without, however, mentioning the relevant scenes from the *Oresteia*. For more on 'The Rule of Three Actors', see Marshall (1994).

[100] Brault (2009) 205.

[101] Marshall (2017) 120: 'Aeschylus creates misdirection'. On the surprising effect of this scene in antiquity, Marshall (2017) 121–22.

[102] Taplin (1972) 94.

Before we move on to the *Eumenides*, one more example of surprise from the *Agamemnon* takes place in lines 1346–71 and refers to the Chorus' sudden division into twelve voices, which happens immediately after Agamemnon's off-stage cries (1343, 1345). In addition to what we have discussed previously about the associations of this abrupt change with the concept of sideshadowing (5.4.1. 'Nodal points') and with suspense (6.4.3. 'Suspense through action delayed'), the Chorus' split and disagreement is also important for the surprise it generates. Their complete unity and unanimity are replaced by a complete disjunction in lines 1346–69, regarding how they are planning to act in the immediate future. In addition to the visually powerful effect of this choral phenomenon from the point of view of the performance, this transition from the single, collective voice to twelve individual voices strikingly reveals the extent of the crisis in the house: even the Chorus can suspend its function when the narrative reaches such a halt[103] and the future looks unforeseeable.

Turning to the *Eumenides*, Apollo reappears unexpectedly before the start of the trial (574), with role which is rather quite different from the role in his previous appearance in the play (178–234). Apollo is uninvited and unannounced, and disrupts Athena's request for silence and attention (570–73, 574–75):

> For now that this council is being convened, it | will be helpful if all are silent and attentive to my ordinances— | both the whole city for all time to come and | also these men, so that the case may be properly decided.
>
> Lord Apollo, rule over your own domain. | Say what concern you have with this dispute.[104]

The unexpectedness of Apollo's arrival could have been discussed alongside with other unexpected arrivals of characters in section 7.3.3 above. However, in this section it is more important to focus on how different his role is compared to his role earlier in the play (64–88, 178–234). By contrast to his earlier role as divine advisor, his return as Orestes' advocate is

[103] Nooter (2017) 177–78.

[104] Drawing on Taplin (1977, 396), I attribute lines 574–75 to Athena and not to the Chorus. I quote Sommerstein's translation (2008).

disruptive in the solemn atmosphere Athena is trying to create (571), and confusing considering that the prosecution does not call any witnesses.[105] Although drawing on those issues Taplin suggests that the text is corrupt,[106] I argue that Apollo's abrupt reappearance can be better explained by the striking transformation of his role from god to Orestes' advocate.[107] The manner of his departure as unmarked and informal shows that once he has fulfilled his task (753/777), he has no further role to perform.[108] This is a minor transformation (does not mark a decisive turning point in the plot) that it can be seen as preparing for the major reversal that follows with the transformation of the Furies into benevolent deities.

The second example from the *Eumenides* comes from the exit scene (1003–47), and, more specifically, from the moment when the Furies as the newly established Awesome Goddesses take on purple robes (1028), as announced by Athena in the final part of her speech (1024–27):

> The very eye of all Theseus' | land will therefore please come forward, a glorious band of | children, wives and older women in procession with **red-dyed** | **clothing** put on [lines missing] give [them] honour!

Their transformation from Furies to Eumenides, what we explored earlier as a reversal (7.4.1), is now at this particular point visually marked as they conceal their fearsome, presumably black (as indicated in line 52), costumes with robes in purple, a ceremonial and celebratory colour. This live, on-stage costume change must have been a dazzling spectacle. The change of black clothing to purple clothing is also surprising because it is linked to the issues of inconsistency and conditionality regarding the role of the Furies previously discussed (especially in 4.3.1 and 4.4.3 above). While readers and spectators are puzzled by those issues,

[105] Sommerstein (2010b) 25.

[106] Taplin (1977) 397–401. Specifically: 'Why does Aeschylus have the solemn preparation in 566–73 only to throw it away? Why should Apollo's entry come at this surprising and inappropriate moment, rather than standing by itself at some less disruptive point? (397).

[107] See Knox (1972, 107–8) on the significance of the employment of the third-actor technique in this scene.

[108] Taplin (1977) 403. On the matter of a later departure in line 777, see Taplin (1977) 403–7. See also Sommerstein (2008) 451 n. 157.

the Furies' new celebratory attire comes to further take them by surprise, as it fixes, legalises, and systematises their already ambiguous status.

What the chosen examples above have in common is that they feature changes in both visual and verbal terms related to a number of different characters (Cassandra, Pylades, the Chorus of the Elders, the Furies). Although those changes are small-scale and do not lead to grand reversals as in 7.4.1, they do nevertheless interrupt the dramatic sequence, cause confusion, and manifest our unpreparedness for a future that lies open ahead.

7.4.3. Surprise through shock

The final section adds to the previous discussion by featuring compelling examples of the horrendous and the monstrous which develop the dramatic effect of surprise into shock. Surprise through shock in Aeschylus is precisely what attracted negative comment in antiquity (as mentioned in 7.2). However, I here argue that it stems from the artful combination of the vivid and the physical on the one hand and the impressive and the unexpected on the other hand. Some of the best examples of this kind of surprise can be found within scenes where Clytemnestra and the Furies play a leading part. From the *Agamemnon* I will look at Clytemnestra's detailed account of the travelling of the beacon lights from Troy to Argos (281–316) and Clytemnestra's appearance on stage standing over the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra (1379–92); from the *Libation Bearers* I will discuss Clytemnestra's exposure of her breast (896–98); from the *Eumenides* I will look at Pythia's description of the Furies (46–59) and the appearance of the ghost of Clytemnestra in the Furies' dream (94–139).

Clytemnestra's speech in the *Agamemnon* 281–316, also known as the 'Beacons Speech', features a strikingly detailed narration of how the news of the Greek victory in Troy travelled to Argos through beacon lights.[109] In thirty-five lines Clytemnestra manifests an absolute control of geographical overview of an area extending from Troy, to the islands and then to mainland Greece: from Ida (283) to Lemnos (283–84) and then to Athos (285), Macistus (289), Messapion (293), and then Cithaeron (298), next to the Geraneia mountains (303), and then to the Arachnaeon mountain (309), and finally Argos (310).[110] Although Raeburn and Thomas

[109] For a detailed presentation of Clytemnestra's 'Beacons speech', see Raeburn & Thomas (2011) 99–104.

[110] On geographical details of the beacon light travel, see Quincey (1963).

argue for Clytemnestra's 'tremendously vivid imagination',[111] I would stress, drawing on Goward, that, on the contrary, the narrative forces us to understand her narration as consisting of real events.[112] Her use of past tense (for example: ἔπεμπεν, 282; ἐξεδέξατο, 285; παρῆκεν, 291; ἀντέλαμψαν, 294) and the employment of chronological sequence in her narration illustrate that the details Clytemnestra provides bear characteristics not of an imaginary description, but of a description based on solid knowledge. She identifies the information she introduces as historical events, her 'token and proof' (τέκμαρ…σύμβολόν τέ, 315), thus, responding to the Chorus' earlier request for 'evidence' (τέκμαρ, 272). Apart from the shock caused by the display of extraordinary knowledge, we are also amazed by how it is possible for a human to have sourced and acquired this information: Clytemnestra's capacity to know the exact name places and route of the beacon fire before it reaches Argos goes well beyond her position as a spectator situated in Argos. Clytemnestra's speech brings spectators and readers face to face with the realisation that they know much less than the unfolding narrative, leaving them in wonder and in uncertainty about what they will have to expect by her in the future.

Although the dramatic convention speaks against the representation of murder on stage, Clytemnestra's narration after the two murders she had just committed has a powerful dramatic effect of surprise through shock (1379–92).[113] Before we look at the details of lines 1379–92, it needs to be noted that Aeschylus' treatment of the myth according to which Clytemnestra is the *main* perpetrator of the crime (and Aegisthus just the abettor) also reinforces the dramatic effect of the scene. Even if the leading role had been attributed to Clytemnestra before Aeschylus, it is now that it becomes an integrated part of the dramatic narrative which draws our attention to the openness and the unexpectedness of the future.[114] The visual impact of Clytemnestra' sudden appearance over the dead bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra is accompanied by an equally powerful description of the gory details of the murder (1379–92):

[111] Raeburn & Thomas (2011) on 281–316.

[112] Goward (2005) 64, where she also opposes to Fraenkel's 'rationalizing idea (1950, II, in 287) that her information is not *ta genomena* ('what actually happened') but *hoia an genoito* ('the sort of thing that happens').

[113] On Aeschylus' treatment of this convention, Easterling (2005) 27 n. 16; Diggle (2005).

[114] For the issue of the date of Pindar's *Pythian* 11, see Finglass (2007b) 17–19.

> I stand where I struck, over a deed completed; I did it this | way, and I shall not deny it, so there should be no escape, | no fending off death. A net with no way through, just as for | fish, I **stake out round** him (**περιστοχίζω**), an evil wealth of clothing; I | **strike** (**παίω**) him twice, and with two groaning cries his legs gave | way on the spot; and I **deal** (**ἐπενδίδωμι**) him a third blow on top now he | has fallen, a thank-offering vowed to the Zeus below the | earth, the saviour of the dead. And so he **speeds** (**ὁρμαίνει**) his life away | after his fall; he **gasps out** (**κἀκφυσιῶν**) quick blood from his throat | -wound and **hits** (**βάλλει**) me with a dark shower of gory dew, and I | **rejoice** (**χαίρουσαν**) no less than a sown crop does in Zeus' sparkling gift | when the sheathed ears swell for birth.

Instead of witnessing the murder as a spectacle on stage, we are offered the opportunity, both as readers and as spectators, to *hear* Agamemnon's murder and then to go over it with the help of Clytemnestra's commentary on it. The lines above constitute an 'action replay'[115] whose content and form are equally shocking. Although the vividness of Clytemnestra's narration is supported by the use of the present tense[116] and of motion-related words (above in bold), what we experience goes much beyond the sense of vividness, as it is startling and intricate. Clytemnestra offers a step-by-step, climactic narration of the event of a murder by the murderer herself, about *how exactly* she committed the crime and *what exactly* was the outcome of her act. She completes this narration with gruesome anatomical details, as for instance the reference to the strike on Agamemnon's lungs which forces him to gasp out blood and which Clytemnestra herself receives as the crops receive god-sent rain (1389–91).[117] The extended description of an act which probably lasted only a few brief moments prolongs its grim effect, illustrates Clytemnestra's 'continuous relish',[118] and makes us experience one shock after the other. In lines 1379–92 Clytemnestra manifests once more her impressive skill to offer

[115] Diggle (2005) 217.

[116] See Fraenkel (1950, III) in 1383.

[117] See also 1385–87. On the use of use of gruesome language in religious context, see Fraenkel (1950, III) on 1387.

[118] Collard (2002) on 1382–3.

strikingly detailed descriptions, making the visualisation of Agamemnon's murder not only upsetting but also irresistible.

In the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides*, Clytemnestra shocks the audience and the readers through two bodily gestures: in the second play, just before her murder she bares her breast (896–98), and, in the third play, when she appears as a ghost she displays the wounds from Orestes' blows (103). In the first example, through the gesture of pointing to her bare breast, Clytemnestra invokes the maternal bond between her and Orestes:

> Stop my son! Hold back, from respect for this (τόνδε) | breast! You often drowsed at it while your gums drew out| its rich milk.

While the gesture itself must have been a striking spectacle for the audience (however it might have been performed[119]), the text communicates the *desired effects* of the gesture on Orestes and, consequently, the readers, enhancing its impact.[120] Although before lines 896–98 the future of Clytemnestra appeared closed with the certainty of her imminent murder to prevail, it now shockingly opens up through her ultimate effort to create another future for herself by requesting Orestes to cancel his plan.

In the second example, the presence of Clytemnestra's ghost in the narrative generates shock and horror due to its supernatural character and strong physicality (103):[121]

> See (ὅρα) these (τάσδε) blows, see them with your heart.

Her appearance now as a ghost coming from the dead is striking not only due to her unexpectedness (discussed in 7.3.3), but also due to the emphasis on her wounded body, which is what gives to the scene the element of horrendousness. Additionally, Clytemnestra's use of the sense verb ὁρῶ and the deictic pronoun τάσδε to point to her wounds by Orestes' strikes forcefully reminds us of the horrific event of the matricide and create anticipation for

[119] Catenaccio (2011) 219–20; Segal (1985) 17–18.

[120] The scholiast of the *Iliad* describes as *kinetikon* and *graphikon* the scene where Hecuba bares her breast to Hector pleading him to stay (Book 22). See Nünlist (2009) 140 n. 18.

[121] On how the appearance of Clytemnestra's ghost might have been staged, see Taplin (1977) 365–67.

Orestes' imminent punishment. Unlike Darius' ghost in Aeschylus' *Persians*, she lacks the authority and oracular vision usually linked to ghosts,[122] but her visceral appearance nevertheless shocks and incurs further future action.[123]

The final example, again from the *Eumenides*, shows how the employment of horror, having been introduced through the ghost of Clytemnestra, is developed further. The scene of Pythia takes us by surprise not only because she re-enters unannounced (see 7.3.1. 'Surprise at the beginning'), but also because it provides Pythia a horrifying description of the Furies (51–55):

> they are | black, utterly revolting in their manner, snoring out a breath | which is unapproachable, while their eyes run with a loathsome | fluid. Clothing of this form is not right, to be brought | near gods' images or into men's houses.

According to Pythia's report, the Furies' appalling appearance and odour exceeds all expectations regarding the anthropomorphic characters that normally inhabit the tragic space. The use of present tense demonstrates their proximity, inviting us to imagine how they look and how they feel, well before and in much more detail than when we will encounter them in line 140.

To conclude, in section 7.4 I have shown how the effect of surprise is employed as a technique which is based on surprise, confusion, and shock. By contrast to 7.3, where the focus was on surprise as the acquisition of knowledge, I have demonstrated that the renewal or the cancellation of pre-existing knowledge can also be very effective. The examples discussed force us to realise that the uncertainties of the future are powerful not only through their unexpectedness and abruptness, but also through shocks which cause further unpredictability for what is to come.

[122] On the appearance of Darius' ghost in the *Persians*, see Garvie (2009) 260. On the appearances of ghosts in Greek tragedy, see Collard (2008) in 681–851; Michelakis (2007) 75–82; Rosenmeyer (1982) 266.

[123] See also Chapter 5, section 5.3.3, where this scene is discussed in the context of the Furies' dream as *foreshadowing* technique.

7.5. Conclusion

In this final chapter, I have argued that in a discussion of dramatic effects related to conceptualisations of the future we need to examine not only suspense (Chapter 6), but also surprise. Surprise has been mostly identified as a feature of Euripides' tragedy, but I have discussed how it can also be related to the temporal dynamics of Aeschylus' plays, where it occurs under specific but varied circumstances. With the examples I explored above, I have shown that the understanding of the workings of surprise through a multiplicity of approaches and techniques sheds light to the inner mechanisms of the plot: surprise at the beginning (7.3.1), through off-stage action (7.3.2), through unexpected appearances (7.3.3), through reversals (7.4.1), through smaller-scale changes (7.4.2), and, finally, through shock (7.4.3).

These sections have outlined my proposition about where exactly and through what kind of events one needs to look for narrative surprises. The process of their identification includes the recognition of their different grades of intensity, of the contexts in terms of plot construction, of the level of cognition (minimum to maximum) of the characters and of the readers and the spectators. Therefore, speaking about surprise in the *Oresteia* demands much more than asserting its presence. The model I have proposed offers the opportunity to put to test those narrative elements which under specific circumstances can generate startling readerly and spectatorial responses.

Specifically, both in the *Agamemnon* and in the *Libation Bearers*, surprise is mostly accommodated within intrigue, human catastrophe, and thwarted expectations. However, whereas in the *Agamemnon* the employment of surprise is achieved through the withholding of information rather than through reversals, in the case of the *Libation Bearers* powerful reversals are central to the generation of surprise. In the *Eumenides*, surprise is generated by the regular introduction of new information rather than through the effectiveness of reversals. Finally, the plot of *Proteus* must have offered plenty of opportunities for the exploitation of surprise, especially in terms of stagecraft. Despite any differences, what the above examples have in common is that they invite us to *recognise* that the plot consists of both probable and necessary events which give shape and meaning to the plot, while also generating successive

and intense experiences of surprise. In doing so, they highlight the unpredictability and the unexpectedness of the future, undermining the sense of complete closure.

In other words, I have argued that the analysis above invites us to understand the *Oresteia,* both the tetralogy and its individual plays, as a network consisting of interacting narrative elements of surprise. Those elements link different events together, increase the level of followability of the story, and command the rapt attention of readers and spectators. It is only through those elements that we are able to fully engage with central aspects of the plot, such as 'the Cassandra scene' in the *Agamemnon*, the matricide in the *Libation Bearers*, and Pythia's prologue of the *Eumenides*: every single time a reader or spectator is struck by surprise, expectations are renewed, awaiting new surprises to take over and exceed them. This constant interplay structures a significant part of how the future is configured in the *Oresteia*. Both surprise and suspense can be associated with narrative progression (6.3, 7.3), but also with narrative misdirection (6.4, 7.4). Both of them are also intertwined with the ideas of anticipation and expectation. While suspense is generated through the development of expectations and the sustaining of anticipation, surprise is provoked through expectations contradicted and anticipation disrupted. While suspense introduces us to the expansion of time and the anticipation of the future, surprise forces us to confront a future that goes beyond our expectations.

8

Conclusions

This study had a twofold objective: to highlight *the functions of the future* in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, and, in doing so, to make a case for the broader *significance of the future* in dramatic narrative. As stated at the outset of this thesis and argued throughout my chapters, these two goals are inseparably intertwined: according to my proposed framework, the detailed exploration of the future in drama needs to be carried out through its narrative configurations. This approach has also been dictated by my scope of pursuing this in the context of Ricoeur's mimesis 3, that is, by examining closely the perspective of spectators and readers. The above, operating as the overarching argument and fundamental principle in all respects, have allowed for a contemporary reading of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* which bring into sharp focus why the future is always *at stake* and how it is to experience it.

This understanding of the future has been explored through a wide selection of critical terminology and methodological angles, as I argue that this is the only way one can overcome the difficulties involved in grasping the temporalities of the future. This multifold task has involved identifying and interpreting expressions of futurity, analysing instrumental future-related occurrences and their meanings, putting into dialogue the plays with contemporary future thinking, and constructing models of understanding readerly and spectatorial responses to the unexpectedness of the future. It has been shown how the narrative of the *Oresteia* provides readers and viewers with unrestricted access to both conceptual and experiential understandings of the future, as well as offering them both abstract and tangible manifestations of the future as something immediate and affective.

Starting in reverse order from the final chapter, I have shown how *expectation* is an attitude towards future events of the plot, which opens up possibilities for how a reader or a spectator might deal with future events in real life. A powerful statement can be made for the future being at stake when we receive events of the plot as *unexpected*. In this light, I have put forward *surprise* as one of the primary functions through which the future manifests itself in narrative as in real life. This Chapter has provided the theoretical framework which enables one to dive into the conceptual implications, the *how* and the *why* of the affective power of surprise. At the same time, it has presented a diverse selection of examples from the *Oresteia*, ranging from reflex-stimulus type of responses to responses linked to full awareness of the advent of the future. Several techniques have been exploited in order for this to be one of the most thrilling dramatic effects: characters' sudden appearances and events taking place earlier or later than expected, demanding our visual, aural, and, mainly, cognitive participation, and comprehension. Even being familiar with the story *and* the narrative and how it will end can be conducive to how we are taken by *surprise*, considering the intricacies and immersiveness of the plot. My argument that our preoccupation with the future calls for the exploration of the workings of *surprise* and its constituents is directly linked to how we conceptualise the future: we plan and prepare for it, under the influence of our expectations, whether they are based on a belief in a structure of the world that is orderly or disorderly (deterministic, causal, contingent). The fact that each of these types of expectation can be challenged in Aeschylus' narrative universe suggests that there is always uncertainty lying ahead. To the potential objection that this may relate to a contemplation of the future that is retrospective, reflective, or similar to the past, I argue that surprise must be identified with unexpectedness as the, always present, core element of futurity. The fact that this element, when narrativised, can be captured and scrutinised, does not take away anything away from its overwhelming influence. The process of studying and experiencing narrative surprise does not lead to learning, preparedness and, thus, overcoming of surprise in real life. On the contrary, those preoccupations allow us to accept that surprise is present even in cases where we consider a situation under control, either by following a story closely like the *Oresteia* or by making life decisions and plans ahead.

By contrast to *surprise* as an instant response, my penultimate chapter has turned to *suspense* as a concept that captures the more prolonged state of thinking, constructing,

imagining, and preparing for the future of the plot. It is not only the unexpectedness of the future which compels readers and spectators to engage with the narrative but also the growing expectation, full of uncertainty, regarding which scenario is *necessary* and *probable* to be fulfilled. Again, familiarity with the story *and* the narrative does not decrease our suspenseful disposition: the *Oresteia* makes use of several techniques which are based on how the flow of information is regulated, whether facilitated or disrupted. These considerations address in a direct way the question of why anyone with an interest in the topic of the future in narrative needs to be involved in the study of *suspense*: the anticipation of the future events of the plot not only situates the reader and the spectator in the same state of anxiety and puzzlement as the dramatic characters, but it also offers them a set of models to reflect on. In real life, while we react to the unexpected with *surprise*, we do not find ourselves in *suspense* and, certainly, we do not call it so when we are occupied with evaluating our future possibilities. In narrative, on the other hand, the conceptualisation of this phenomenon through the mechanism of *suspense* shows how the future can come across as both uncharted and narrativised, and understood as such. Although it is not generally easy to separate out *suspense* and *surprise*, I have tried to show how they are informed by entirely different techniques which need to be examined on their own terms.

Another pair of concepts I have employed to show how the future in the tetralogy is narrativised with all its uncertainty and volatility is *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing*. Like with *suspense* and *surprise*, I have sought to keep these terms separate (in sections 5.3 and 5.4 respectively). By mapping *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* techniques, I have argued that the narrative of the *Oresteia* gives prominence to two main qualities of the future, its *openness* and its *closedness*. One tends to associate *foreshadowing* with the future as closed and *sideshadowing* with the future as open, but I have shown that, in the case of the tetralogy, this is problematic: *foreshadowing* and *sideshadowing* submit to an interplay between certainty and uncertainty, constructing an intriguing synergy. More specifically, although those two critical terms bear certain and fixed features related to the anticipation of a future which is *either* always controlled *or* always undecided, their artful employment in the *Oresteia* constantly undermines *our* ability each time to predict with accuracy what is coming, another evidence of a future being always at stake.

Equally important is another pair of concepts through which I have sought to grasp the meaningful links between future and present, those of the *future present* and the *present future* (Chapter 4). By contrast to the approach I have followed in Chapters 5 to 7, the workings of those concepts in Chapter 4 are examined in each play individually, from the *Agamemnon* to *Proteus*. This play-by-play arrangement offers an alternative mode of analysis which invites us to zoom in on a selection of dramatic characters, exploring how they experience their future as either being in the making (*present future*) or being already complete (*future present*). The characters view and live their future in diverse ways. *Future present* is associated with passivity, while *present future* is associated with pursuit. *Future present* might signify fulfilment in one play and catastrophe in another play. Similarly, *present future* might force characters to action in the face of a desired future or, alternatively, in the face of an uncertain future. The reader and the spectator are confronted with a whole range of perspectives that differ from character to character and from play to play, which force them to face a whole range of possibilities for connecting our presents with our futures.

Another important aspect of the future that this thesis has scrutinised is its teleological implications (Chapters 2 and 3). My thesis has shown that, in the *Oresteia*, the multiple meanings of *telos* as purpose, fulfilment, and ending provide access to a number of major temporalities of the future and how they are experienced. Like Chapter 4, Chapters 2 and 3 have followed a play-by-play examination, and this has been carried out at a lexical level (Chapter 2) and at a narratological level (Chapter 3). In Chapter 3, I have shown that the teleological idea of the future as end cannot be fully contained within the narrative limits of the four plays. Their endings play with our expectations for complete closure by entertaining a range of possible outcomes: a desired and necessary but *incomplete* closure, a necessary but undesired *open-endedness*, a *misleading sense* of closure which is *only presented* as desired and necessary, and a *neat closure* which comes both as a necessity and as a desire. I have shown that, through the fulfilment of mimesis 3, we are compelled to engage with these types of ending and, then, to contemplate on how we position ourselves in relation to the need for control and planning, on the one hand, and the contingency of real-life crises on the other hand. Turning to Chapter 2, my study on *telos* would have been incomplete without a close reading of the language of Aeschylus' narrative. My linguistic analysis of the word τέλος and its cognates in the *Oresteia* has demonstrated that their ordinary meanings and interpretations

need to be constantly informed by the dramatic narrative itself, for a more thorough and intricate reading of the preoccupations of the tetralogy with *telos* and, thus, with the future. I have tried to show that, for all its significance, it can only be a starting point for a discussion of broader issues that do not confine themselves exclusively to lexical considerations.

My study has offered a number of insights into how each play of the *Oresteia* narrativises the future. In the *Agamemnon*, the future is defined in terms of its accessibility or its obscurity. The future is accessible to certain characters, namely to Cassandra and Clytemnestra (though this changes for Clytemnestra at the end of the play), while at the same time it is utterly or relatively obscure to other characters (utterly for Agamemnon, relatively for the Chorus). After the murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra, the future manifests itself as fulfilled, and only at the very end of the play are we invited to engage with a future that reverts to its default status of being 'at stake': this is thanks to the Chorus' references to Orestes' return in the distant future. The *Libation Bearers* picks up this sense of crisis which undermines the order Clytemnestra and Aegisthus now represent; their control of the future is disrupted by Orestes' planning, which culminates in the murder of Aegisthus and the matricide. If, in the *Libation Bearers*, the future unfolds through planning, in the *Eumenides* the future unfolds through debate and compromise. In the *Eumenides*, the future breaks its bonds with the past, opens up, and transforms into something that lies in the sphere and responsibility of the community, rather than the characters themselves or the gods. This new conceptualisation is most clearly manifested at the end of the play when the Furies swiftly take on a new role in the community of Athens, as Awesome Goddesses, in a celebratory but incongruous ambiance. Finally, *Proteus* is likely to have offered a less threatening but by no means closed way of thinking about the future. Its preoccupations with being a satyr drama might well have invited a way of looking at the future as a field of new adventures, inventiveness, and experimentation.

The discussion I have undertaken contributes to the ongoing research in the field of Classical studies in reference to two main areas: the future as a concept, and the dramatic narrative as a mode of storytelling. I have shown how both of them need to be pursued under the influence of Ricoeur's foundational idea of the world that is being brought (mimesis 1) to a given story (mimesis2), and to the possibilities for transforming that world (mimesis 3).

Firstly, pertaining to the idea of the future as concept, I have demonstrated that, in contrast with the idea of timelessness which is usually attached to Greek tragedy (as for instance in Aristotle's claims about the universality of poetry in the *Poetics*),[1] what we need to seek out in these plays is the idea of timeliness. The idea of timeliness foregrounds the significance of every act of watching or reading for the present and, above all, for the future of the readers and the spectators. Shifting the focus of timeliness from the present to the future, readers and spectators are framed in their capacity not only to follow and believe in a story, but also to anticipate its possible continuations in accordance with their own untold futures. I have shown that by reaching out for tools, ideas, and methodologies from other research areas in the field of the Humanities (in my case those of narratology, philosophy of history, and literary criticism), one can undertake modes of analysis that existing debates within Classics have so far failed to pursue with urgency and vigour.

Secondly, as far as the dramatic narrative is concerned, the paradigm of order for Ricoeur (following Aristotle) as a mode of storytelling, I have shown that by theorising dramatic narratives we can shed more light on perplexing narrative concepts. Ricoeur argues that such an approach to drama 'is capable for extension and transformation to the point where it can be applied to the whole narrative field.'[2] More specifically, I have shown that we can theorise the future in dramatic narrative, the focus of my thesis, through a back and forth between the future of the characters and the future of readers and viewers. Although this process may or may not provide firm answers for the future, and complications may or may not be resolved at the time of reading or spectating (which raises questions similar to Augustine's *distentio animi*), it does, however, raise broader questions about human autonomy and responsibility in the face of indeterminacy and uncertainty of a future at risk of being lost. It is exactly this *discordant concordance* that is narrativised, drawing connections between art and life. As I have shown, in every act of reading or spectating, the world proposed by the text elucidates, reinforces, challenges, or contradicts the world of its readers and spectators; but also it is elucidated, reinforced, challenged, or contradicted by that world in turn. In my analysis, I have tried to do justice not only to the challenges but also to the promises of

[1] See Introduction p. 15. See also Halliwell (2002) 108.

[2] Ricoeur (1984, I) 38. See also Fludernik (1996, 348): 'the most important narrative genre whose narrativity needs to be documented'.

Ricoeur's work on narrative, as it transcends conventional divisions and hierarchies between the world of the narrative and the world of those that encounter it, the original audience and the subsequent readers and spectators, the page and the stage and so on.[3]

As mentioned in the Introduction, the *Oresteia* is by no means the only narrative where the examination of the topic of the future is worth undertaking. Material from Aeschylus' other plays can offer the grounds for further research along similar interpretative lines, while such a project could also be expanded to include Sophocles' and Euripides' plays. In doing so, we would move towards the broader picture of the diverse conceptions of the future in Greek drama (both complete and fragmentary) and their contribution to shaping our own conceptions of our futures. For instance, in Aeschylus' *The Persians* one could study techniques of foreshadowing (such as Atossa's dream and the prophecy of the ghost of Darius) and their associations with an open or closed future, while in Aeschylus' *The Suppliants* one could focus on the dramatic effect of suspense. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Creon's idea of a predetermined future and Antigone's idea of an open future could be examined in parallel. The uncertainty of the future could be a topic for discussion in Euripides' *Medea* with regard to Medea's process of planning to kill her and Jason's children. In the prologues of Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Ion* one could focus on their misleading predictions, while in the plot of Euripides' *Orestes* we could explore the dramatic effect of surprise. Another suggestion would be to examine the idea of the alternative future, for instance in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*, where a different and mostly non-tragic future for both the characters themselves and for the spectators and the readers lurks persistently at the background of the narrative. Turning to Greek comedy, Aristophanes' *Frogs* is one of the most obvious places to start, as it dramatises the workings of the transition from the present to the future via the past.

The above are only a selection of topics and narratives where the methodology of this dissertation may be applied. This kind of research would result in the expansion of 'the future in narrative' into other areas of Classical studies as they engage with current preoccupations in other fields of the Humanities. In a world where people are constantly trying to come to terms with change by minimising and avoiding the effects of the passing of time, the

[3] Despite the significance of Ricoeur's theory of mimesis, one of the mysteries of contemporary criticism pinpointed by Currie (2013, 38) is that 'Ricoeur's work on narrative has so little informed literary critical and narratological approaches to time'.

narrativisation of different concepts of the future through acts of reading and watching emerges as a timely and compelling task.

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Appendix: Τέλος-headwords in the *Oresteia*

The lexical inventory below provides an overview of the occurrences of τέλος-terms under examination in Chapter 2. As explained at the beginning of Chapter 2, I employ Seaford's fourfold semantic framework as the starting point of my discussion: *telos* as a) 'completion', b) 'payment', c) 'ritual', and d) 'authority'.

a) Τέλος as 'completion' (or 'fulfilment')

ἀτέλευτον (adj.), 'unending'	*Ag*. 1451
ἐντελέων (adj.), 'in their full prime'	*Ag*. 105
ἐτελέσθη (v.), 'come to fulfilment	*LB* 1067
παντελής (adj.), 'all-fulfilling'	*LB* 965
τελέαν (adj.), 'final'	*Ag*. 1458
τέλει (v.), 'give fulfilment'	*Ag*. 973
τελεῖ (v.), 'will end'	*LB* 1021
τελεῖν (inf.), 'to fulfil'	*Ag*. 974
τέλειον (adj.), 'fulfilled'	*Ag*. 1432
τελεῖς (v.), 'take to the end'	*Ag*. 1107
τελεῖται (v.), 'to be fulfilled'	*Ag*. 68, 1487; *LB* 385,
τέλεον (adj.), 'full-grown'	*Ag*. 1504

τελέσασιν (part.), 'those who have brought it to an end'	*Ag*. 806
τελεσφόροις (adj.), 'fulfilled'	*Ag*. 998
τελεσφόρον (adj.), 'fulfilled'	*Ag*. 1000; *LB* 541
τελευτᾷ (v.), 'the end of'	*LB* 534
τελευταῖος (adj.), 'the last'	*Ag*. 314
τελευτᾶν (inf.), 'to grant an ending'	*LB* 308,
τελευτήσαντ' (part.), 'who ended'	*Ag*. 929
τέλος (n.), 'end', 'completion'	*Ag*. 1109; *LB* 874;
Eum. 243, 544, 729	
τελοῦντος (part.), 'the accomplisher'	*Ag*. 1253
τελουμένου (part.), 'dead'	*LB* 876
τέλους (n.), 'end'	*Eum*. 64
τελῶ (v.), 'shall fulfil'	*Eum*. 899
ὑπερτελής (adj.), 'rising high in its strength'	*Ag*. 286

b) Τέλος as 'payment'

τελεσσίφρων (adj.), 'purposeful'	*Ag*. 701
τελείσθω (v.), 'to be paid'	*LB* 310
τελεῖται (v.), 'to be paid'	*LB* 385
τελουμένας (part.), 'exacted'	*LB* 284
τελουμένου (part.), 'exacted'	*LB* 872

c) Τέλος as 'ritual'

προτέλεια (n.), 'preliminary/first or prenuptial rites'	*Ag*. 65, 227
προτελείοις (n.), 'preliminary/first or prenuptial rites'	*Ag*. 720
τελείας (adj.), 'fulfiller (of marriage)'	*Eum*. 214
τέλειε (adj.), 'master-fulfiller'	*Ag*. 973

τέλειοι (adj.), 'bringing to fulfilment'	*Eum*. 382
τέλειον (adj.), 'the Fulfiller'	*Eum*. 28
τελεσφόρου (adj.), 'fulfilled' (for prayers)	*LB* 212
τέλος (n.), 'fulfilment' (for marriage)	*Eum*. 835

d) Τέλος as 'authority', 'duty', 'task'

ἀτέλεια (n.), 'full authority'	*Eum*. 361
τελείου (adj.), 'master'	*Ag*. 972, 1432
τέλεον (adj.), 'with full authority'	*Eum*. 393
τελεσφόρος (adj.), 'with authority'	*LB* 664
τελέως (adv.), 'with final authority'	*Eum*. 320, 953
τέλος (n.), 'task', 'duty'	*Ag*. 908, 934, 1202; *LB* 760; *Eum*. 434, 743